

A Satin Slipper

Leon and his bride were seated in a compartment by themselves. They had given the conductor a fee and promised themselves solitude on their wedding journey.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor.

Just as the train was about to move an elderly man sprang on the step and entered the compartment. The door slammed, the bell struck, and the train moved away. Although annoyed by the intrusion, the young couple continued their conversation in English, when they were interrupted by their fellow traveller in much better English than their own, "Monsieur," said he dryly, "if you have any secrets to relate I would advise you not to do so before me in English, as I am conversant with that language. I am sorry to intrude upon you, but this is the only compartment I can find place in. However, I will try to go to sleep."

And he faithfully tried to do so. But his efforts were in vain, and finally he drew a book from his valise and began to read. When he plunged into his sack, he drew therefrom a large roll of Bank of England notes, and showing them to Leon asked if he could change them at the next town. Leon replied that it was probable he could do so, as the road was much frequented by English travellers.

When they reached the next town, the Englishman descended first. After him came Leon, who endeavored to conceal his wife's ankles as she descended the steps. Such are young husbands. Suddenly there darted from the groupe of loungers on the platform a young man of peculiar appearance. He was sallow and unshaven, his eyes were bleared and blood-shot, his clothing was shabby to the last degree. His once black coat was buttoned closely to the chin, probably to conceal the lack of a shirt. He advanced toward the elderly Englishman. "Uncle," said he humbly. "Is that you?" said the other angrily. "Be off! I don't want to have anything to do with you."

"Come, uncle," said the other, with a mixture of menace and humility, "don't be so hard on a man."

He seized the elder's arm and led him aside. After some moments' conversation the uncle seemed so softened and opening his valise gave the other some bank notes. The nephew devoured the remaining roll with his eyes, and after a curt word of thanks disappeared in the crowd.

Leon and his bride entered the hotel and were shown to the best room in it. Their status as a newly married couple procured them that honor. The walls were covered with paper representing scenes around Naples. Unfortunately certain idle travellers had added mustaches to all the female faces and pipes to all the male, so the effect was to a certain extent lost. The room was called the "blue room," the furniture having once been of that color.

Leon ordered dinner to be served in

their room. The difficulty in procuring it excited his wonder, and on inquiring he found that officers of the Fifty-second hussars were giving a dinner to their comrades of the Sixty-first chasseurs that very evening; hence the confusion. To his horror he found that the banquet was spread in the room immediately adjoining the blue chamber. However, there was no help for it. The host swore that the officers were the quietest men he ever saw in his life; that, excepting the chasseurs, there were no more lamblike individuals in the service than the hussars, and, besides, they always rose from the table before midnight.

As Leon, somewhat troubled in mind, returned to the blue chamber he noticed that his English fellow traveller occupied the room on the other side. The door was open, and through it he saw the Briton seated before a bottle and glass and contemplating the ceiling.

"Well, it makes no difference, after all," said he to himself. "The Englishman will soon be tipsy and the officers will be gone by midnight." When he entered the blue chamber Leon looked to bolts and bars. On the officers' side there was no door, but a very thin partition.

The young couple had a mediocre dinner, which they would have enjoyed more had it not been for the talk of their military neighbors. The conversation of these gentlemen had nothing whatever to do with tactics, strategy or the art of war in any way. On the contrary, it consisted of highly seasoned stories. And such stories! They were followed by roars of laughter, and even our friends of the blue room found it difficult at times to preserve their gravity.

But the stories grew broader, the laughter grew louder. Although he was not prudish, Leon thought the situation rather embarrassing for his bride, and, sending for the landlord, he requested him to beg the gentlemen not to make so much noise, as there was an invalid lady in the next room. The host entered the banqueting room, and his request was followed by a roar of dissent. Finally one voice prevailed over the others and cried: "What sort of a woman is she?"

"Well, gentlemen," replied the host, "I don't know for sure, but I think she's a bride and that they're on their wedding tour."

"A bride?" roared the revelers. "Bring her in. Fetch 'em both here. We want to drink to the bride and talk to the husband."

Our friends in the blue room trembled. They feared an assault would be made. But the same voice prevailed over the din, and it was evidently that of a superior officer. He lectured them on their lack of courtesy, and there was comparative quiet for awhile. But from the muffled laughter that broke out from time to time Leon and his bride had an idea that they were still the topic.

Suddenly there was a roar from the left hand room. "Garson," shouted the Englishman, "gimme another bottle o' port."

The port was brought and the Englishman grew quiet. Finally the officers, having drunk all they could carry and some of them more, departed after having joined in a parting toast to the bride.

Quiet at last reigned over the hotel. The night was clear, the moon shining brightly. Leon and his bride looked out from the window and inhaled the fragrance borne from the flowers in the garden below. Suddenly Leon's gaze fell upon a man who was sauntering amid the shrubbery. He walked with his head bent down, a cigar in his mouth and his hands thrust into his pockets. As he turned the moonlight fell upon his face. It was the Englishman's dissolute nephew.

The night wore on. Leon and his bride had almost forgotten their Eng-

lish neighbor, when they heard a strange sound in his room. It was that of the fall of some heavy body. Muddled with this there was a peculiar crashing grating sound, followed by a stifled cry. Silence. Then there were two or three muttered oaths, and silence again.

The young couple shuddered. What could it mean? Leon tried to reassure his trembling companion, but he was interrupted by the cautious opening of the next door. It was softly closed again, and then slow and apparently careful footsteps were heard in the hall. They were lost in the distance. They ceased. Again all was still.

Soon the young bride was sleeping calmly. But not so Leon. In spite of himself the sinister face of the Englishman's nephew returned to his recollections. There was hatred, he thought, in the glance cast upon the uncle by the young man when he left him. And then that roll of bank notes in the valise, and that dull, heavy sound just now, like the fall of a body upon the floor—the cry—the curses. Such was the train of thought that ran through Leon's mind.

Mechanically he fixed his eyes upon the door which communicated with the Englishman's room. There was a little space between the bottom of the door and the flooring. But by the dim light falling from the partially turned down gas he could see something forcing its way under the door. It seemed at first like a knife blade, for the edge was thin and reflected back the light. It moved slowly toward a little blue satin slipper, which had been thrown carelessly near the door.

"What can it be?" thought Leon.

"What can it be?" thought Leon. "Is it a knife? No, for it has divided into two parts. And now it divides again, and yet again. What can it be? It is some liquid."

The thing slowly crawled toward the little blue slipper. It encircled its heel. It stained its front. It was a liquid of strange and unmistakable color—the color of blood.

For a long time Leon lay and gazed upon the stained slipper, and the reddish stream which encircled it. He pictured to himself the corpse lying in the next room; its discovery the following morning; the door opening into the room, of which the bolts were on his side; the blood stained slipper. These things passed through his mind, and a cold sweat started out upon him. He attempted to rise and hide the slipper. As he did so his wife awoke and started with affright as she felt his icy hand.

"What is the matter?" she cried. Leon explained to her the terrible situation in which they were placed. He arose and attempted to remove the telltale stains from the slipper, but it was useless.

Day was breaking. Already the servants were moving round the hotel. In a few hours the crime would be discovered, and the officers of the law would be upon them.

Alas," said Leon, "our only hope is this. At 8 o'clock the train leaves for Paris. If the Englishman's body is not discovered before that time, we are safe. We will take the train and lose ourselves in the great city. There we shall be safe."

His weeping bride flung herself upon his bosom. She felt almost as though she had committed the deed.

But there yet remained two mortal hours before the train left. At each step in the corridor they trembled with affright. They made their preparations for departure. Leon's bride wished to burn the bloody slipper, but he restrained her and concealed it on his person.

Seven o'clock sounded. The hotel was alive again with bustling servants. Leon forced his wife to take a cup of coffee, although she declared that her parched throat refused to swallow. Then they descended to the waiting room, and Leon demanded his

bill. The host presented it and begged his pardon for the noise of the previous evening. Leon assured him that they had passed a very quiet night.

"Well, I am glad of it," said the host. "However, your neighbor on the left didn't disturb you much, I'll be bound. He's sleeping like a dead man yet."

Leon shuddered. His wife grasped his arm convulsively.

"He's an English milord," continued the host. "We've got another English man here, too, who paid his bill and left this morning. He gave me an English bank note. I hope it's good. Look at it. What do you think?"

He showed Leon a bank note. On one corner of it there was a reddish stain.

"It seems to be a good one," said Leon, with forced calmness. "How long before the train goes?"

"Half an hour yet," replied the host. At this moment a waiter entered.

"Gimme some brandy and sode, quick, for the English milord," he remarked, "and send up a chambermaid with a mop. He dropped a bottle of port on the floor last night, and the room is flooded."

To the amazement of both landlord and waiter, Leon and his wife sat down and laughed until they cried.

"Order us a good breakfast," said he to the landlord. "We don't go until the two o'clock train."

PAINS IN THE BACK

FREQUENTLY DUE TO SLUGGISH LIVER OR KIDNEY TROUBLES.

Mr. Frank Walters, of Exeter, Tells of Suffering and How Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Cured Him After Other Medicines Failed.

From the Advocate, Exeter.

Mr. Frank Walters is a young man personally known to most of the residents of Exeter, where he has lived nearly all his life. Talking with the editor of the Advocate recently Mr. Walters said—"In justice to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills I think it my duty, in view of what they have done for me, to add my testimonial to the thousands of others that have been printed. For some months I suffered most severely from pains coursing up and down my back. It was thought that these pains were due to liver and kidney trouble, but whatever the cause they frequently left me in terrible agony. The pains were not always confined to the back, but would shift to other parts of the body. As a result I got little rest, my appetite became impaired, and I fell off greatly in weight. I tried different remedies suggested by friends, which having no effect almost disgusted me with medicine. Then a personal friend urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I was not easily persuaded because I had about concluded that medicine would not relieve me, but he insisted and finally I decided to try them. I purchased one box at first, and to my astonishment before it was finished I was greatly relieved. Then I got a couple more boxes and these restored me to my former good health. I do not hesitate recommending this medicine that others may profit by my experience, and not suffer tortures as I did."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. If your dealer does not keep them, they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.