

REFUSED.

You can't possibly avoid this party, Theophilus; indeed, I especially desire that you should go to it.

Dear lady! her idea of Hercules went lengthwise; for though I certainly stood about five-feet-eleven in my stockings, I otherwise had the proportions of an extremely fashionable silk umbrella.

With regard to the party, of course I had to give in; but my acquiescence brought me many a pang of silent and bitter mortification.

The miserable festival proved the climax of a painfully bashful life. Although I use the word bashful, I know that it is impossible for any one to understand the full significance of the word in its application to my particular case.

No ordinary comprehension of the word can convey an adequate notion of the complaint.

The bashfulness seemed to be an unconquerable horror, and eternal nightmare, that existed only to overwhelm me wherever I went.

Solitude brought no relief, for whenever I sought its seclusion I was troubled by the reflections arising from the weakness and childishness of my public appearances.

The party at the Nolans', to which I had been invited, was the first I had gone to since, as a boy, I had been dragged to a juvenile dance.

My re-appearance in society was at first suspicious.

That is to say, I only blushed slightly as I humbled some sort of greeting to the hostess, and stamped only on one person's toes—those of irascible old Bizzard, the lawyer—as I retired into a shaded corner of the room.

I noticed that Bizzard during the whole evening looked at me with a cross-examining expression of countenance that was very embarrassing.

From the secluded position I took up I managed to get a fair view of the company.

It seemed a very neighborly gathering, but much to my annoyance, there was hardly a face that did not awaken recollections of some awkwardness in my behavior.

Bashful experiences were revived on every hand.

There was that benign and good old lady, Mrs. Babbaze, before whom, two days previously, I had vainly retreated round a corner because she was accompanied by two young female acquaintances.

She evidently was justly branding me as a rudo fellow.

The severe Mrs. Captain Trunton I had grievously offended years before by making a blockhead, but unconscious, allusion to the doubtful escapade of a brother of hers on 'Change.

The only joke I had ever attempted before the venerable Miss Dowser was a youthful fling at the axe of forlorn spinsters.

Three pretty girls—especially Susan Joy—were there, under whose eyes I blushed regularly at church every Sunday morning; a blush that became more vivid when the sun, through the stained glass windows, brought reflection of blue to my nose.

Among the men there was the lawyer, whose loss I had crushed; the editor of the local newspaper, who wouldn't publish scathing attacks upon things in general; the rector, who was sure to floor me with some abstruse question regarding elastic; and old Captain Trunton, whom I was positive I overheard on one occasion call me a milkop.

Fresh embarrassment arose when I heard an old schoolfellow's—Jack Stanner's—name announced.

Jack was a lively, rattling fellow, whom I had not seen for long enough; I knew he was the possessor of a tremendous store of ridiculous reminiscences of early days, when my unhappy sobriquet was 'Lobster.'

Fortunately, the young lady whom I had the honor of taking in to dinner was very distant and freezing in her manner. But the relief proceeding from this circumstance was of short duration.

I had just found out, with no little discomfort, that the soup was intensely hot, when the ancient Miss Dowser swept down upon me and flushed my cheeks by a request for salt.

"Oh, Mr. Theo!" she exclaimed, on seeing a little spit, 'isn't it very unlucky to spill salt?'

I muttered something to the effect that I didn't know that there was anything particularly calamitous associated with such an action, but nobody seemed to hear the muffled tones in which I uttered this wise conclusion.

"To spill salt," said Susan Joy, "I have heard, is indeed a very bad omen; what does it portend, Mr. Theo?'

'Addition has a very charming and true essay on the absurdity of such superstitions,' heavily remarked the rector. 'I presume you remember that excellent work, Theo?'

Attention directed to me in this manner

ed manner upset completely the small amount of equanimity I was blessed with. What did I care for salt, superstition, or Addison? Instead of replying, all I could do was to mumble, at the same time inclining my head, as I felt cheeks, forehead, and neck becoming suffused with crimson.

I noticed Jack Stanner's eyes fixed upon me with a curiously comical look, which told that my plight reminded him of earlier days.

My tongue became parched, and great beads of perspiration broke out on my forehead, when I heard his horrid chuckle and saw him bend to whisper something to the pretty girl at his side, who shook her head reprovingly, but seemed amused.

Jack was occasionally very vulgar.

After that time confusion was complete, and self-possession impossible. Miss Dowser demanded something of other simultaneously with the lady on my other hand, who requested a different condiment.

Of course I gave the wrong thing to each and in the endeavor to put matters right I upset a decanter.

With a fearful effort to smile at the misfortune, I made a nervous and excited clutch at the thing to stop its ruddy flow from injuring the cloth.

This proceeding brought my elbow into sharp contact with the nose of Miss Dowser, who uttered a shriek as though she had been shot, and startled the whole company, making every man among them glare at me in indignant amazement.

It was a mere trifle.

The injured party didn't even rise from her chair, and Mrs. Nolan tried to pass the incident off as pleasantly as possible.

I was speechless.

Annihilated by confusion and disgrace, my whole body seemed to be burning; my clothes became too small for me, my mouth became as dry as a lime-kiln.

In a sort of spasmodic way I kicked out my right foot under the table.

Great thunder!

A thing that I had thought was a small mat proved to be a vile and vicious terrier, called 'Snap,' which had sneaked unobserved into the apartment!

The little brute turned upon one of my legs and fixed his teeth in it.

Giving a yell, such as my pent-up misery naturally strengthened, I made for the door.

'Snap' was after me, with a determined hold on one of the tails of my coat, which I had to leave with him as I fled to the hall.

Seeing old Mr. Nolan in pursuit, I shouted an apology for my misfortunes, sized a wrong had that went down over my ears, and in a moment was out in the open air.

Oh! the relief given by the cold night breeze!

Even in the quandary in which I was placed—torn, pained, ashamed and disgraced—I found comfort in the keenness of the rushing wind.

I could have broken a hole in the ice and taken a plunge in the Neva, and would have considered it a positive luxury to be gradually frozen to death alone on a drifting iceberg.

On reaching home, I managed to get to my room swiftly and in secret.

Removing my tattered garments, I threw my weary and injured body upon the bed, and mused and rolled about for hours, during which I more than once was on the verge of weeping, in the acuteness of my vexation.

Slowly, however, I dropped into a troubled slumber, and dreamed that I fell from the top of St. Paul's.

Can anyone imagine it to be possible that I can now look back upon that experience with indifference, yet, almost with amusement?

Such is really the case.

The past, with all its awkward memories, does not raise the slightest blush, nor even an inward qualm.

But before telling how this was brought about, I must remark that my ignominious retreat from the Nolans' didn't in the least way interfere with the pleasure of their party.

Indeed, I have a suspicion that my troubles only added a little more to the fun of the evening.

After that night I subjected my unbearable condition to a very searching examination.

Blushing and general bashfulness were carefully scrutinized.

Why did I blush in church? Why did I blush before girls? Why did I blush when commanded? Why did I blush before everybody? Why did I blush when alone?

All this was made a matter for deliberate and minute inquiry.

And, in course of time, the knowledge gradually dawned upon me, as it will under similar circumstances to nineteenth-twentieths of those who have a kindred weakness, that the feeling does not spring from any inherent physical trouble, but rather from an intense development of a mental affection, known as self-consciousness.

To find a remedy, let us look upon the world as it unquestionably looks upon us—with indifference.

Every man and every woman has plenty to think about in connection with themselves without troubling themselves about other people's blushes.

A Chopped Bible.

A few years ago, a Bible contributor, while passing through a village in Western Massachusetts, was told of a family in whose home there was not even the cheapest copy of the Scriptures—so intense was the hostility of the husband to Christianity.

The contributor started at once to visit the family, and found the wife hanging out the week's washing. In the course of a pleasant conversation, he handed her a neatly bound Bible.

"With a smile that said, 'Thank you,' she held out her hand, but instantly withdrew it. She hesitated to accept the gift, knowing that her husband would be displeased if she took it.

A few pleasant words followed, in which the man spoke of the need of the Bible to that need, and the woman resolved to take the gift. Just then, her husband came from behind the house with an axe on his shoulder.

Seeing the Bible in his wife's hand, he looked threateningly at her, and then said to the contributor, "What do you want, sir, with my life?"

The frank words of the Christian man, spoken in a manly way, so far softened his irritation that he replied to him with civility. But stepping up to his wife, he took the Bible from her hand saying: "We have always had every thing in common, and we'll have this too."

Placing the Bible on the chopping block, he cut it in two parts with one blow of the axe. Giving one part to his wife, and putting the other in his pocket, he walked away.

Several days after this division of the Bible, he was in the forest chopping wood. At noon he seated himself on a log, and began eating his dinner. The disordered Bible suggested itself. He took it from his coat pocket, and his eye fell upon the last page. He began reading, and was soon interested in the story of the Prodigal Son. But his part ended with the son's exclamation, "I will arise and go to my father."

At night he said to his wife, with affected carelessness, "Let me have your part of that Bible. I've been reading about a boy who ran away from home, and after having a hard time, decided to go back, and how the old man received him."

The wife's heart beat violently but she mastered her joy and quietly handed her husband her part without a word.

He read the story through and then re-read it. He read on far in the night. But not a word did he say to his wife.

During the leisure moments of the next day, his wife saw him reading the now jointed parts, and at night he said abruptly, "Wife! I think that the best book I ever read."

Day after day he read it. His wife noticed his few words which indicated that he was becoming attached to it. One day he said, "Wife! I'm going to try and live by that book; I guess it is the best sort of a guide for a man."

And he did. A strong prejudice against religious truth, growing out of a partial conviction of its growing, is often followed by a changed life, and such was this experience.—[Youth's Companion.

As Smart as Any Fireman.

Bill is a big horse, with large intelligent eyes, and a face which plainly says: "You may walk close to my heels without the slightest danger." There is a spring to his walk which shows uncommon strength, and when he gets in motion with a fire department truck behind him the truck is pretty sure of being first at the fire.

For seven years Bill has been quartered with Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 in Chambers Street, and all the firemen are in love with him.

"He is as gentle as a kitten," said Fireman Lynch last night, "and knows as much as any man in the house."

A reporter had just entered the engine house, and was impressed by the appearance of Bill, who was harnessed to the truck alongside of Tom, his companion, waiting for a signal to go to a fire that proved to be just outside of the district.

Bill heard the reporter say that he was a very fine looking horse, and acknowledged the compliment by bobbing his head. Then he stretched his neck and affectionately put his nose on the reporter's shoulder, and when the reporter went close to him he rubbed his face against the reporter's. The firemen gathered around and patted and petted the big animal until it was learned that they would not have to go to the fire, and Bill and Tom were unharnessed. Bill walked back into his stall with a regular Bowery swagger, just as if he knew that he was a wonderful horse and was proud of it.

"Bill is sixteen years old," Fireman Lynch says, "and seems to get wiser all the time. If there is a green horse to be broken in he is put alongside of Bill, and then he learns in no time. I think that Bill teaches him. Bill always knows when the gong is going to strike before it sounds. Do you see that combination instrument on the wall there? Well, it makes a slight clinking noise half a second before the gong sounds. Bill always hears it, and if he is lying down he quickly jumps up and gets ready to run to the truck. The stalls, you see, are in the back of the room, and we can stand here in front and call Bill and he will walk right up by himself. He does so many intelligent things that I would not know where to begin to tell them. Although he is old, I don't know of any young horse that would swap him for. No, Tom is not as Bill, but then he is a young horse and has not been long in the business. Bill is teaching him fast, though."—[New York Sun.

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whom everybody knows as the successful manager of the Largest Hotel Enterprises of America, says that while a passenger from New York on board a ship going around Cape Horn, in the early days of emigration to California, he learned that one of the officers of the vessel had cured himself, during the voyage, of an obstinate disease by the use of

Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

Since then Mr. Leland has recommended Ayer's Sarsaparilla in many similar cases, and he has never yet heard of its failure to effect a radical cure.

Some years ago one of Mr. Leland's farm laborers bruised his leg. Owing to the bad state of his blood, an ugly scrofulous swelling or lump appeared on the injured limb. Horrible itching of the skin, with burning and darting pains through the lump, made life almost intolerable. The leg became enormously enlarged, and running ulcers formed, discharging great quantities of extremely offensive matter. No treatment was of any avail until the man, by Mr. Leland's direction, was supplied with Ayer's Sarsaparilla, which allayed the pain and irritation, healed the sores, removed the swelling, and completely restored the limb to use.

Mr. Leland has personally used

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We have Mr. Leland's permission to invite all who may desire further evidence in regard to the extraordinary curative powers of Ayer's Sarsaparilla to see him personally either at his mammoth Ocean Hotel, Long Branch, or at the popular Leiland Hotel, Broadway, 27th and 28th Streets, New York.

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