

A NICE NEST-EGG

"Wat-son!"

It was Bill Gavine, skipper of the Hepvar, bellowing in a voice that made up in strength what it lacked in sweetness.

Samuel Watson, ship-chandler, a man short in stature and in temper, looked whence the sound came, and, in response to Skipper Gavine's gesticulations, he moved to that part of Ebstown Quay where the Hepvar lay.

"What d'you want?" queried Watson. "A word with you, I hear you have a good-looking daughter?"

"I haven't said anything of the sort. It wouldn't be modest, seeing she's so like her father."

"Well, one statement or the other isn't true."

"But what's set you on this tack? You aren't thinking of marrying, are you? If you are, you'd better look elsewhere for a bride. My Kate wouldn't have you. You're young and handsome, but you aren't amiable enough."

"See, here, Watson, drop that fool talk. It don't become wisdom just because you put on a solemn face. I'm not thinking of you for a father-in-law."

"Then what did you call me over for?"

"Come down to the cabin," said the skipper, curtly, leading the way.

Watson followed, his every step plainly expressing protest. Soon the two were seated, each with a glass of rare wine before him.

"You drink that," said the skipper. "It's pleasant to taste, just as what I have to say will be pleasant to hear."

Watson's surprise was visible in his features. But, since the skipper was devoting himself to his liquor, Watson betted his curiosity and did the same. When they finished the skipper resumed.

"It's about your daughter, Watson."

"You said that before," retorted Watson, irritably.

"And it's about my nephew."

"Oh! Never heard of him before."

"You'll hear plenty before you're much older. Your daughter could tell you a lot if you asked. Harry Gavine is his name. I've reared him since he was quite a little chap. He met your daughter for the first time six weeks ago, but already they have settled the terms of a life partnership to be signed in the church vestry as soon as possible. Harry wants to purchase old Gifford's Ocean Breeze. Gifford's widow is looking for a purchaser at two thousand pounds. Harry has a thousand of his own. I've promised to help him, if you'll do the same. Then the young ones will settle down and live happy ever after. So you see, Watson, you and I will soon be relations."

"No we won't."

"Oh, won't we? Why?"

"Because my daughter isn't going to marry your nephew. She'll get married all right. But she isn't going to be Mrs. Harry Gavine."

"She might be a great deal worse," said the skipper of the Hepvar, "you are playing the fool, Watson. Them young folk have fallen over ears in love without asking your permission first. Perhaps it was very wrong of them. But it's a way young folk have. Now, I know one of the couple, and I can warn you he isn't a youngster to be bluffed on a matter like this by anybody. He has a bit of his uncle in him, and if his uncle was going wooing to-day—"

Watson laughed derisively.

"What are you 'hee-hawing' at?" asked the skipper, rudely.

"At the idea of you going wooing. It's about as silly as the notion that I'd give your nephew my daughter."

"Bill had been striving to suppress his anger at this unexpected opposition. Now he abandoned the strife."

"See here, Watson, I don't want to say anything derogatory about a lady—and Miss Kate Watson may be a lady, even though you are her father—but I don't see why my nephew should follow you for your daughter. And, hang me, I shan't allow him to. There's better fish swimming. I only need to tell him what sort of a man he'd have for a father-in-law to frighten him out of it."

"I'm glad we're agreeing," said Watson, rising. "Take it from me, you've heard the last of this fairy tale. I'm going home to talk to my girl. If you want to know what good that will do you'll find out by asking your precious nephew in a day or two."

And Mr. Watson bounced up the companion way, leaving Skipper Gavine to ponder over the surprises life contains.

"But, father," said Kate Watson, "even if your friend, Skipper Gavine, is such a wicked person, his relative may not be."

"Rubbish! What do you expect from a nephew of Bill Gavine?"

"I expect a ring to-morrow. He took the size of my finger yesterday."

"Tell him to put his ring through his nose. You aren't going to disgrace your family by bringing him into it. Your relations are honest, respectable people. What qualifies has Harry Gavine got to commend him?"

"It's difficult to tell you, because the qualities that commend him most to me are qualities he doesn't show when others are present. I shouldn't like him to—if it would be embarrassing."

Samuel Watson felt that he was being

ing chaffed, so he entrenched himself behind his paper, and Kate went out for a walk.

Half an hour later she stood with Harry Gavine in a green lane amid that privacy which lovers crave. Their conversation, heated to an unflinching degree, concerned the action of their relatives.

"Let us cut the painter," Harry was saying. "We are independent of the old craft."

But Kate shook her clever head. "It would be wrong for me to forsake my father," she said. "It would be bad business, besides," she added.

Then she started whispering. Some evenings later Skipper Gavine noticed a daintily-dressed girl picking her steps along Ebstown Quay. In common with all men Bill believed he had a perfect taste in female beauty, and he instantly set this fair maid in the highest class. He enviously wondered what lucky young fellow would receive such a visitor.

"Good evening, Captain Gavine," said a soft, mellifluous voice.

The young lady was looking at him with eyes that made his own dazzle.

"Good evening, my dear," he said, recovering himself and his gallantry. "Will you step aboard?"

"Thank you, I will. I have come far and dared much to see you, but I feel repaid already by the sight of your kind face."

For one delicious moment the skipper held the flatterer's tiny hand as she leaped lightly on deck.

"Now, I wonder what queen has graced my ship?" he said.

"You'll be sorry when you find out. In asking me on board you are taking a viper to your breast."

"My breast is quite ready to accommodate a viper so lovely."

"But I am told you were speaking unkindly of me. I am Kate Watson."

Bill Gavine's confusion would have roused pity in a heart much less tender than Kate's.

"My ignorance," he murmured. "No man would say unkind things after seeing you."

"Then you won't do it again?"

"No-er!"

She seemed satisfied by the emphasis. "How is Harry?" she asked. "I haven't seen him for three days—it seems years."

"Well, my dear, you understand matters. Your father won't let you love my nephew. So, for spite, I told my nephew that if he didn't stop loving you I'd cut him out of my will."

"And he preferred money before me?"

"Isn't that, but he's a dutiful nephew, same as you are a dutiful daughter."

"I'm no such thing."

"It don't look nice when a pretty girl's disobedient."

"But if you had been robbed of your sweetheart would you have taken it lamb-like?"

"Course not."

"No; I can guess from your brave look that you wouldn't. You would have come through fire and water to win the girl you loved. The young men now-a-days aren't that sort. I'm broken-hearted with their tameness."

She ostentatiously drew an imaginary tear. Her seeming emotion deceived Skipper Gavine and dispelled his opposition.

"What did you come here for?" he asked.

"To see if you'd help me."

"What could I do?"

"It's like this. My father has frightened Harry out of courting me, so he has started courting Widow Gifford; not because he loves her, but because she is the owner of the Ocean Breeze, and he's determined to get possession of it. It will now go round the town that I have been jilted. None of the boys will want me because I'm second-hand—Harry Gavine's cast-off sweetheart. The girls will sympathize before my face and laugh behind my back. Now, if I had a sweetheart to put in Harry's place, the laugh would be on my side."

"Do you want me to look out a sweetheart for you?"

"No. I was wondering—it's an unladylike suggestion—but I was wondering if you would pretend to be my sweetheart for a little. You aren't very old," she continued, hurriedly, "and you are so nice-looking and good-natured that all the girls would be green with envy. They would say I had made a wise change. They would think I had thrown aside Harry instead of Harry throwing aside me. It would save me from a terrible humiliation. Of course, if you don't want to help me, just say so. But, seeing you are responsible for my position, I think you might."

Though Skipper Gavine recognized the extraordinary nature of the proposal he was not averse to enjoying an agreeable experience and at the same time helping this maiden all forlorn. With a secret prayer that somehow matters would end happily he assented.

But he promptly interviewed his nephew.

"I thought you'd show more pluck," he said, reproachfully.

"Why, 'twas you that compelled me. Said you'd cut me out of your will if I didn't."

"I was bluffing; but s'pose I meant it. Fancy giving up a nice girl for love o' money or fear o' her father."

"I've had an interview with her father, a very pleasant gentleman. He was raspy at first, but I promised not to look at his daughter if he objected. A father is entitled to obedience from his daughter, same as you expected and received from me."

"It's a parson you should have been. I have a good mind to try on Miss Watson myself, just to save the family reputation."

Bill watched closely to see how his nephew would receive this first hint of the new scheme.

"You're welcome," Harry said, affably. "I'm going to court Widow Gifford myself, so you won't disturb me. Besides,

it would keep Miss Watson in our family. She'd be my Auntie Kate then."

Bill fancied his nephew stifled a laugh as he uttered the last sentence. But, no—his face was quite solemn. So old Bill Gavine actually began playing at sweethearts with pretty Kate Watson.

The people at Ebstown couldn't understand it all. They said so with tire-some reiteration. Miss Watson had transferred her affections from nephew to uncle; Harry Gavine was courting old Gifford's widow; Skipper Bill was displaying all the foolish levity of a young lover. Watson the chandler was distracted by his daughter's willfulness. She had boldly announced her increasing affection for Skipper Gavine. With surprising frequency she met and had long, earnest conversations with the bluff old sailor. Incredulous eyes noted the facts, venomous tongues communicated them to old Watson.

He tried the effect of strongly-expressed prohibitions. But he was surprised to find that the strength of character upon which he prided himself was inherited in his daughter. In her it did not seem that admirable thing which he imagined it to be in himself. He pleaded and protested in vain.

"I shall never get a sweetheart at all if you go on like this," said Kate. "You objected to my first sweetheart and he deserted me. Now I have got another and you are objecting to him too. I may as well resign myself to perpetual spinsterhood. So long as Mr. Gavine finds pleasure in my society I won't forbid him, and no other body need try."

Watson tried all the same. He sought the skipper of the Hepvar and reasoned with him humbly. The skipper poured contempt on the chandler's meekness. Under the spell of his renewed youth and the prospect of Kate Watson for his wife old Bill's head was getting light. He had given over playing, and had begun to make love in earnest. He sent his sweetheart a daily present accompanied by a billet-doux, in which he declared his passion and invited her to name the happy day.

And, though Miss Watson never replied definitely, she was obviously not displeased. Why should she be? Bill asked himself. He had once been fascinated among the girls. He felt his power reviving, and, my word, why should he not wield it to win so fair a bride? And so, as he pointedly refused to sympathize with a father's grief or to recognize his own folly, the interview with the chandler ended abruptly. And the atmosphere was torrid for hours thereafter.

III.

Harry Gavine called regularly at Widow Gifford's. He had just quitted her house one night when a man overtook him.

"Well, Harry," said Mr. Watson, amiably, sidling up. "You and Widow Gifford's good friends now-a-days."

"Yes. That night you forbade me seeing Kate any more I went in to see the widow about the Ocean Breeze. I found her a most charming person. Between you and me, Watson, I have got amazingly friendly with her. Of course, she has no father to say she mustn't do this or that."

Watson chose to ignore this pointed thrust.

"You're an excellent young man, Harry," he said. "The way you've behaved in this heart-breaking business makes me admire you."

"Thanks," said Harry, blandly. "You have my sympathy in your troubles, but I don't see we can do anything with our foolish relations."

"I've been wondering if we couldn't," interrupted Watson, eagerly. "Kate used to love you. I believe you could win her back to yourself again if you tried."

"I dare say I could, but you said you wouldn't have me for a son-in-law."

"That was a joke, Harry. The way you have respected my wishes convince me you're the chap to be my son-in-law. My dear boy, I'd do and say anything if you'd help me to stop that misguided girl from marrying a man older than her father."

"But what could I do?"

"Chuck the widow and make up to Kate again."

"I might fall between two stools. Kate might not look at me, and the widow might have me up for breach of promise."

"You try on Kate, and I'll buy up the widow."

"But the widow has the Ocean Breeze, and my heart's set on owning it. My only chance is in marrying her."

"She's too glad to sell the ship."

"Yes, for two thousand pounds. Where am I to get so much money?"

"I'd stand good for five hundred, on condition that you married Kate."

Harry Gavine stood silent, making a great show of hesitation and deliberation.

"I see a heap of difficulties," he said loftily. "I'll take some time to think things over. Then I'll let you know."

With this cold comfort the chandler had to be content. But he went home throbbing with joy at the prospect of averting the calamity of a marriage between his daughter and old Bill Gavine. With the same feeling arising from a similar cause, Harry Gavine also hurried home.

His uncle sat awaiting him.

"Halloa, uncle," he said. "what's wrong? You don't look a happy lover."

"All women are queer," said Bill, gloomily, "but Watson's girl's the queerest. Her moods change like lightning. It's exciting work trying to understand her. At first she was sunshine every time and everywhere. Now it's constant thunder and squalls. You were cute to sheer off from her, Harry. But it wasn't fair letting in your poor old uncle. She has amazing notions about money, too. She seems to think I'm a

millionaire. She says when we're married she'll have a couple of servants and a pony trap. To-night she has added a motor-car. She's careless, too, about people's feelings when she jokes. For instance, to-night I said, joking like, that she shouldn't talk so confident, because I hadn't married her yet. She whips out a packet of letters I've been fool enough to write her and she reads out the silliest bits of them. Then she laughed heartily just to let me hear how 'loud' laughter in court' would sound if I was up for breach of promise. She's not the girl I thought she was at all. She's making me quite nervous."

And Bill sighed heavily.

"He used to be fond of you, Harry," he resumed, insinuatingly.

"That was before you cut me out."

"I'd be glad to stand aside for you again."

"No use. Widow Gifford's my game. I'm bent on being owner of the Ocean Breeze. I haven't the money, but I can get the ship for nothing by taking over the widow along with it."

"I'll provide two-fifty if you take Kate out of my hands."

"It isn't much for the risk of marrying such a terrible girl."

"I'll make it five hundred," pleaded Bill.

"I'll think it over," said Harry, yawning ostentatiously and moving to his bedroom.

Within twenty-four hours he gave Mr. Watson and Skipper Gavine his decision. He told each one privately and separately that his terms were £1,000, take them or leave them. Each hesitated and haggled a long time, but in the end each succumbed, leaving Harry to deal as he thought best with the delicate matter he had taken in hand.

His success was surprising. Within a short time he had two glaringly-strained interviews with Miss Watson—one in the presence of her father, another in the presence of Uncle Bill. The young lady displayed an acrobacy of temper and treated Harry Gavine with disdain that made each old man tremble for the success of their scheme. But Harry evidently exercised some occult influence over her, for, though with much seeming reluctance, she ultimately restored him to favor.

Relieved and rejoicing, Samuel Watson and Bill Gavine resumed their ancient friendship, and in due season and with due ceremonial the Gavine-Watson wedding took place. The one-time opposing seniors were there, smiling approval and blessing, and the bride made Uncle Bill her ally for life by sweetly kissing him ere she drove off on her honeymoon.

It was the morning after the wedding, and the skipper was eagerly looking for the chandler on his usual walk along Ebstown Quay.

"Come down the cabin, Watson," he said, when his friend appeared. "My housekeeper was turning over an old jacket of Harry's this morning when this letter dropped out. Read it."

The skipper poured out two glasses of wine, while Watson read the following, in his daughter's handwriting:—

"My Darling Harry,—Your note delights me. Our little plot is succeeding beyond our wildest hopes. But don't accept five hundred. Stick out for a thousand from each. Don't budge an inch and we'll get it, for they can both well afford it. Their two thousand will buy the Ocean Breeze. Your one thousand will make a nice nest-egg for the happy home we hope to set up together. Mrs. Gifford has played her part splendidly, and is confident our scheme will be crowned with complete success. —Your loving bride-to-be,

"KATE."

Watson laid the letter down and looked desperately across at old Bill. Neither spoke. The skipper handed his friend one glass, and, lifting the other, said, solemnly:—

"Joy to the happy pair."

"The happy pair," echoed the chandler.

The sentiment was difficult to swallow; but with the aid of their wine they managed it.

IV.

HE HAS LIVED 111 YEARS.

Captain Diamond, of Berkeley, Cal., is Lively as Most Men of Fifty.

There are old men and old men, but Capt. Goddard E. Diamond of Berkeley, California, who confesses cooly to 111 years, is an old man who is able to do things.

Capt. Diamond looks like a man of 50. He has to ascribe his longevity to something, of course; and his answer is "abstemious living." For more than eighty years he has eaten no meat, and used neither tea nor coffee. Liquor and tobacco he has never tasted in his life.

He eats freely of fish, eggs, cheese and milk, but with these exceptions his diet is vegetable. He avoids white flour, and his staples are bread and mush made from the entire wheat, oat and barley meals. He eats much fruit.

Hot water is his chief beverage, and his dietary is the copious use of olive oil. It must be real olive oil, however. Capt. Diamond is not merely an old man; he is one of the most active men in the community. He practises daily calisthenics, and has long served as a trainer in that course, teaching younger men to take on the youthful agility that he has himself.

He is a skilful bicycle rider and a skilful boxer as well. Not half the men of half his age could last five rounds with him within the roped ring. His skin is as clear, his eyes as bright, and his step as elastic as those of the average sound and healthy man of 50.

German silver contains no silver, but is an alloy of copper, nickel and zinc. It is harder than silver. The best proportions of the alloy are 50 copper, 20 nickel, 30 zinc.

"CORRECT ENGLISH: HOW TO USE IT."

By Josephine Turok Baker, Editor of the Magazine, "Correct English: How to Use It." Evanston, Illinois.

WHAT TO SAY AND WHAT NOT TO SAY.

Don't say: I know a party who will buy the lot; say: I know a person who will buy the lot. Note—"Party" is a legal term, and should not be used in the sense of "person." Don't say: I would if I was her, or I would if I was him; say: I should if I were she, or I should if I were he. Note that "should" in the first person is the correct form to indicate simple subjunctive futurity. Note that "were" is correct, for the reason that the subjunctive mode, and not the indicative, is required. Don't say: It is twenty minutes to five; say: It is twenty minutes of five. Note—"Of," and not "to," is required to show the proper relation. Don't say: I expect that you did; say: I suppose that you did. Note.—One cannot expect anything in the past. Don't say: I live in Yonkers, or I live in Kenwood; say: I live at Yonkers, or I live at Kenwood. Note.—One lives in New York or in Chicago, but at Yonkers or at Kenwood; that is one lives in a large city, but at a small place.

COMMON ERRORS OF THE CARELESS SPEAKER.

"He don't" and "don't he." "She don't" and "don't she." "It don't" and "don't it."

These errors are of common occurrence, and are generally made by persons who should know better.

The person who uses the expression "I think he don't," would be astonished to hear the response "I beg to differ with you, but I think he do."

It is proper to say "he do," for "don't" is the abbreviated form of "do not." The conjugation runs, "I do not," "you do not," "he does not," "consequently the contracted forms are "I don't," "you don't," "he doesn't." So let us eschew "he don't" in the future, and say either "he does not," or what is perfectly permissible in easy utterance, "he doesn't."

Whenever I speak of this particular error, the response that generally greets my ears is "Isn't it strange that so many well-educated people make that mistake? It must be that when one uses that expression he don't think of what he is saying. I never use it."

"It ain't" is another unpardonable error. It sometimes seems as if all other mistakes might be overlooked if one would refrain from "it don't" and "it ain't." "Ain't" is a loose contraction of "am not," but not of "is not."

"I am not," "you are not," "he is not," is the proper conjugation, the contracted forms being "I'm not," "you're not," or "you aren't," "he's not," or "he isn't," not "he ain't."

Some persons who endeavor to be correct eschew contractions altogether, but there is no good reason why one should not use contractions if one will use the proper ones. To refrain from using them has a tendency to lend a pedantic air to one's speech. In dignified utterance before large assemblies one has less license, but in conversational utterance, contractions are permissible.

ENGLISH CHURCH RELICS.

Dog Tongs, Gossip Bridges and Skins of Danish Marauders.

Dog tongs are osken pincers about four feet long that in the past were used by church sextons to pull dogs from under pews. The dogs of the past followed their masters to church and made nuisances of themselves. If the sexton tried to eject them, they hid under benches or behind the pulpit, where they could not be reached. Hence the tongs, which yanked them forth squirming and growling with rage and disappointment.

Gossip bridges resemble a baseball mask. They looked on, and they were made of thin bars of iron, with a flat, leaf-shaped piece to enter the mouth and hold the tongue motionless. The bridges were made in two sizes, male and female. The female bridge could readily be distinguished, the leaf-shaped piece in its case being very much larger and stronger.

A number of old English churches, says the New Orleans Times-Democrat, preserve proudly both dog tongs and gossip bridges. The tourist, if he will, may see this summer a pair of dog tongs, the nippers studded with nail points, in Denbighshire's Gyllylllog Church and in Hereford Cathedral. The Parish church of Walton-on-Thames has a gossip bridge, and so has Hampstead Church, Staffordshire.

Danish marauders used to be flayed or skinned alive in good old England, and their hides were nailed to church doors. Hadstock Church and Copford Church, both in Essex, have doors covered with hides of Danes.

THE ALWAYS-AILING KIND.

Friend—Why did you pass that man as a good risk? I heard him tell you he had over ten different kinds of chronic diseases.

Insurance Doctor—Yes; but, you know those kind of fellows never die.

The greatest battle of modern times was that of Leipzig, fought on October 16th, 1863. Napoleon had 190,000 men, and the Allies no fewer than 290,000. The total loss of the two armies was 16,000 men.