

An Innocent Drummer.

He bade his wife a tearful good-bye.

"My love, my only one. The time will soon be here when I shall be in a position to snap my fingers at fate and set up as my own boss. Then we shall have no more of these cruel partings."

"And you will be true to me?"

"As I always am," he responded.

"You did not forget to put that photo you had especially taken for me in my 'gripsack,' did you?"

"Oh, dear no! Are you sure you will look at it sometime, love?"

"You wicked doubter; you know I should be wretched without at least such a precious resemblance of my pet to look at daily, nightly."

Draw the veil of charity over his grief and the treachery of one in whom he had such unbounded confidence.

In brief, she, his only love, his pet, his wife, had secretly planned to make him "wretched." She had taken that photograph from his gripsack, and was gloating over his misery when he should discover that only memory remained to him, for the time being, of his darling's looks.

"The dear fellow, how he will scold me for the trick," she thought; "but I will send him the photo in the very first letter." Thus appeasing her conscience, she waited for his letter.

It came from Chicago.

"My heart's delight," it began. "Got here O. K. this A. M. Have been wrestling with the trade all day, and a tough time I've had of it! Weary and fagged I have retired to my room, shut out the gilded atmosphere of sin that envelopes this terrible city, and taken from my satchel your sweet picture. It is before me as I write. I shall kiss it when I have said my evening prayers. It will rest under my pillow. It is my one solace until I hold you, my sweet wife, in these faithful arms again."

Thus far had she read, then she toppled over on the floor.

What comfort she found there it is hard to say; but a great determination rose within the stricken wife, who went out an hour later and sought a telegraph office.

Her husband had been saying his prayers abroad that evening, and when he got to his hotel about midnight his spiritual emotions received a rude shock by a telegram from his "only love." It was elaborate for a dispatch; but under the circumstances one could not expect an outraged wife to transmit her feeling by the slow mail. The dispatch said:

"You are no longer the only drummer who is not a liar, as you have always claimed. Let the fraternity make you their chief in the art. Had you taken the pains to look for the photo you say your prayers to you would have discovered that I had—to tease you—removed it. My faith in you is dead, dead!"

The husband clutched his hair.

"What the devil did I write to her, anyway?" he muttered.

"By Jove! I must have been piling on the taffy. That's what a man gets for trying to make a woman feel good! Poor little dear what a fume she must be in! Lucky for me she gave her grievance away. What geese

women are! Bless her little noddle, her faith shall be resurrected."

After a while his face cleared:

Forthwith he telegraphed to a knowing friend.

"Send me, first mail, photo of my wife. Beg, borrow, steal it somehow. Mum's the word. Will write particulars."

About a week later a drummer, in dignified martyrdom stood face to face with a stern but very wept-out wife.

She expected to see him meek and humble, but he gazed upon her with scorn, and then passed on to his room in crushing silence.

She was amazed. With quick impulse she followed, thanking Heaven he had not locked her out.

"Well," she began, with wavering courage, "what have you to say for yourself?"

Coldly, cruelly he looked at her.

"I?" he queried.

"Woman, if it were not for the overmastering love I bear for you, I should never, never look upon you more."

His face convulsed with tragic suffering that was balm heart to her to witness, but she only sneered.

"Can you explain the deception you tried to practice upon me?"

"Can you obliterate the insult put upon your husband in that unwomanly dispatch? A woman with so little confidence in her husband would better live alone. For my part, I am not only disgusted but disenchanted."

He turned sorrowfully away and bowed his face in his hands. She approached him and laid the letter which had caused her grief, right under his eyes.

"Read that. Knowing you had no picture of mine, what was I to think?"

"What any intelligent, right minded wife would have thought; you would have said to yourself: 'He is incapable of deceit; he has my picture, somehow.'"

But you did not have it.

He looked at her with sad, resigned sorrow. His lips quivered as he murmured: "Oh, woman! without an atom of faith!" Then he put his hand in his pocket and produced her photograph.

"Oh! Darling! Forgive me! You had my picture! This old thing taken long before we were engaged! Why, I didn't know you ever had one of these?"

The restored confidence made her pretty blue eyes swim in tearful joy. She put her arms around him, asking his pardon, caressing even his coat collar.

"My dear," said he, looking into her face with grave but loving reproach, "let this be a warning. Never doubt me again, no matter what appearances may be. I can always look you squarely in the eyes and say, I am innocent."

And she believed him.—Ex.

SARCASTIC OLD THING.—Husband—I have been making my will, my dear, leaving you everything, with—ah—full power to re-marry—

Wife—Oh, darling, never.

Husband—Yes, love; and (with a sardonic chuckle) in that case I shall feel assured there will be at least one who will daily deplore my death.

Hard Times.

It is seldom that a time comes that there are not many who say, these are hard times. The cry has been heard frequently and long and loud the past two or three years; but are the times hard, or have they been so? "Hard times," like most other expressions, is a relative term. They may be hard as compared to a time when they were better; they may be very good when compared with others that were worse. It is worth the while of the croakers to compare things of the present sometimes, with those of a less prosperous period of the past. Let us take for instance, a period about the close of the eighteenth century. Professor Thompson of Harvard, in discussing the subject of wages, mentions some interesting facts on the subject. He said, that in 1793 the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Canal Co., advertised for workingmen, offering \$5 a month for the winter months and \$6 a month for summer months with board and lodging. In 1794, in a debate in the lower house of Congress, it was brought out that soldiers received the enormous sum of \$3 a month. In 1797, a Rhode Island farmer paid a good farm hand \$3 a month, by the year, and those who put in the eight busy months got \$5 a month. Women hired out as help for the princely sum of twenty-five cents a month and board. Even as late as 1820, there was little improvement in wages. People who labor ought certainly to get fair wages; all, indeed, that the business will justify paying them, but it will save some unreasonableness, perhaps, if they would all reflect upon the extremely low wages that were paid universally, not such a long time ago. It may be said without a particle of hesitation, that laborers in the United States get better wages to-day, than any ever got in the whole world before.—*Leather Gazette.*

An Illegal Tax.

A wholesale firm in Cincinnati, have pushed to a successful termination in the Courts of Louisville, Ky., a case which is of general interest to the merchants of the country. They brought a suit to recover money paid by them to the City of Louisville as license for their traveling men who visited Louisville for the purpose of selling goods. The discrimination against non residents was so flagrant that the firm concluded to test the matter in the higher courts. The amount of the license demanded was \$100 in the case of each salesman. The result gained in the Court of Appeals is as follows: Opinion of the Court by Chief Justice Pryor, reversing:

1. An ordinance of City of Louisville which provided that any person who conducts his principal place of business without the city, and shall offer to sell goods by sample within the city, shall be required to obtain annual license therefor, and shall be required to pay for such license a sum not required to be paid by persons having their principal place of business within the city discriminates against the residents of other States, and is, therefore, in violation of the Federal Constitution. The fact that the ordinance discriminates against residents of this State outside of the city as well as against residents of other States does not add to its validity.

2. One who, under a mistaken view as to the validity of the ordinance, has paid to a city a sum of money required by the ordinance to be paid for a license to do business, is entitled to recover the money back, the ordinance being invalid.