

that his own document must have gone astray in the post.

That evening, however, they each received a communication from the clairvoyant, from the outside of which it was plain to see that Madame Hebert's talents did not extend to the art of calligraphy, and that her education generally had not encroached very seriously on her valuable time.

Mr. Chuttle hastened to the widow's cottage to acquaint her with the contents of his epistle, and there found Mr. Topleigh discussing the extraordinary genius of Saltcombe's Sorceress.

The interpretation the widow had received was the very one she would have wished; so was Mr. Topleigh's. But Mr. Chuttle's was in somewhat grimmer strain.

"I told her that I dreamt my pig had won first prize at Saltcombe Cattle Show this year," he said, choking back a sob, "and this is 'er reply." And straightening out the thumb-marked missive he read it aloud in a quavering voice.

"Dreams go by contraries," it ran. "Disaster is staring you in the face. If you had dreamt your pig had died, it would have won first prize; but as you dreamt it won first prize, it will surely die. And even if it don't it will bring bad luck. If it is not ded the morning after you receive this, give it to your worst enemy. It is your only chance."

The next morning the gate of Mr. Topleigh's farm swung open, and the bowed form of Mr. Chuttle, preceded by a huge and grunting pig—which was very much alive—passed through.

Having carried out Madame Hebert's instructions to the letter, Mr. Chuttle made his way home alone, rather lighter of heart and firmly resolved to pry no further into matters occult.

Apart from the fact that the feelings of the rivals became more bitter towards each other as time went on, things were running as smoothly as could be expected in the circumstances, and Mrs. Nash seemed as undecided as ever as to which was the more favored of her suitors, when one Sunday something happened which saved her any further trouble, and the rivals any further anxiety, by settling the question then and there.

She had invited both strings of her bow to afternoon tea, and had, as usual, introduced the subject of dreams and Madame Hebert—whose advertisement, by the way, had not made a second appearance—when Mr. Chuttle, to her pleasurable surprise, had hailed the subject as one which positively made conversation, and dramatically recorded at length a dream which, he said,

had happened to him on the previous night.

"I was going down this very street," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "and passing this very cottage, when the door opened, and Mrs. Nash, lookin' as beautiful as ever"—here he paused and glanced sheepishly at the widow, who blushed in piebald fashion and coughed affectedly—"appeared before me astonished gaze, dressed all in bridal clothes."

The widow's blush deepened.

"Oh, Mr. Chuttle!" she interrupted, playfully flicking him with the corner of a serviette, "what nonsense you do talk—doesn't he, Mr. Topleigh?"

"Gin'rally," assented Mr. Topleigh, with lowering brows.



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"Yes, all in bridal clothes," the narrator went on, "and 'anging on her arm was the 'usband to 'oom she had just been wed."

A short silence ensued, then: "Who—who was it?" cried the widow breathlessly.

"Oo?" roared Mr. Chuttle, banging his fist on the table to emphasise the question. "Oo should it be other than Mr. —"

"Yes?" panted both his listeners.

"Topleigh!" said Mr. Chuttle. The widow gasped.

So did Mr. Topleigh.

Mr. Chuttle leaned back in his chair, breathing hard.

"Now send that to Madame Hebert and see what she has to say about it," he said decisively.

And the widow, not knowing whether to faint or treat the startling disclosure as a huge joke, decided, after a few moments' consideration, to adopt the middle course and forward the dream to the clairvoyant for interpretation.

As Mr. Chuttle made his way home that night he showed many outward signs of exultation, and when at last he reached his own front garden, all freshly laid with unrolled gravel, he permitted himself a few clumsy steps of a sand dance until his dog called him to earth with a peremptory and reprimanding bark.

The fact was that Mr. Chuttle had been giving the subject of dreams a good deal of his