

There was no help for it; he must get them on; he could not get in his slippers, and his old boots were too far advanced into the "shoe and yellow" to be seen in company with the gorgeous apparel which he had provided especially for this occasion; he, therefore, sat with a sigh of resignation on the edge of a chair and tried to persuade the new-comers to go on one.

He tried the right boot first—somehow men generally do try the right boot first—and it went on beautifully; one strong steady pull, a slight wriggling of the toes, a light tap of the heel, and it was on. Mr. Fowler felt so elated at his success that he rose and walked a few steps about the room in the one boot and a slipper to see how it went. It went well; and he re-seated himself with a satisfied air to try the left boot.

When accidents happen, they usually occur with the left boot, and so it was with Mr. Fowler; just in proportion as the right foot had gone on easy, so the left boot seemed determined to have a struggle for it before yielding and allowing itself to be walked in as any respectable boot ought to do. First there was a decided misunderstanding between the heel and the instep; both wanted to go down together—the heel having a little the worst of it,—which resulted in a dead-lock, and no amount of wriggling and steady pulling could persuade that boot to budge; then Mr. Fowler discovered that the boot was twisted a little, and he had to take it off and put it on straight; then the toes got bent under the sock, which had become a little damp with the perspiration superinduced by the exertion of the first encounter, stuck to the lining of the boot, and another dead-lock ensued.

A good five minutes had been spent; the hands of the clock pointed to five minutes to eight, and Mr. Fowler very nearly swore as he pulled off the refractory boot for the second time; he rose and, going to the dressing-table, took up a box of powdered chalk, and poured a portion of its contents into the boot, giving it a good shake to make the powder spread.

"I'll get you on this time," he muttered, "or I'll know why."

He knew why. Right off. Seating himself on the edge of the chair, he elevated his foot, inserted it into the boot, and, after gently working it well down, gave "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull" altogether, firmly determined to get it on then or never. But alas for the vanity of human expectations! While the foot was at its greatest altitude, while the pull was at its maximum strength, and the boot at its severest point of resistance, "crack, crack," went both straps, and Mr. Fowler, totally unprepared for so unforeseen a catastrophe, fell backward over the chair, and rolled ignominiously on the floor, to the serious disarrangement of the shirt-front, and very nearly causing a dislocation of the collar button.

Then he did swear. There was no doubt at all about it this time; he gave vent to an expression which ought to have convinced any right-minded boot that it ought to go on; but no, that obstinate boot was beyond control, and could not be by any means persuaded to do its duty, and so, after one more ineffectual trial, Mr. Fowler was forced to give up the contest. Mournfully he pulled off the right boot, which had behaved so well; spitefully he kicked away the left boot, which had behaved so badly; and with a sad, but resigned smile put on the old boots which he had so scornfully rejected a few minutes before.

The boots were old; they were alightly torn, and they needed cleaning; but there was no help for it, he must wear them or nothing, so he wisely determined to submit to circumstances and don his old friends, mentally resolving, however, that he would keep his feet as much under the sofa as possible, or hide them behind the friendly shade of Beattie's dress if he was permitted to sit sufficiently close to her.

But they needed cleaning. That fault was quickly remedied, and in a short time he had them shining like mirrors. He pulled them on, placed his feet together and gazed at them with something like a smile of satisfaction; they did not look so bad after all; it was wonderful how a good dose of blacking and a little skillful brushing had improved their personal appearance. All there was one flaw he discovered; the right toe had been missed; it did not shine with the resplendent brightness of the surrounding leather; he elevated his foot on the edge of the chair, stooped over, brush in hand, to rectify the omission, and—oh! luckless Fowler!—in that fatal moment the sole button by which his braces were fastened behind gave way with a loud snap, and he could feel his trousers give a sudden start towards his knees.

Here was a terrible position; he could not go out without braces, his trousers would not keep up without them; it was too late to think of taking them off and sewing on a button, it would take too much time, so there was nothing left to do but to go down stairs to the servant-girl, and humbly request her to pin him up, which she obligingly consented to do, and accomplished the task after having only twice run the pin into his back.

Poor Fowler! his misfortunes had been great and he was not in a very sweet or serene mood when he finally lit a cigarette—a cigar would have taken too long to smoke—and, after putting a few cloves in his pocket, started for Miss Beattie's residence.

Miss Beattie Sudlow, the object of Mr. Fowler's attention, was a fair-haired little creature of sixteen years of age who had managed to get ac-

quainted during her walks to and from school. She lived with her mother and aunt in a small, two-story house in St. Dominique street. The house had a high stoop, and the few square feet of ground in front of it were enclosed by a low picket fence. Mr. Fowler had succeeded in gaining an introduction to Mrs. Sudlow, but that lady thought Miss Beattie altogether too young to think of having a lover and Mr. Fowler's visits were discontinued.

He had not seen Miss Beattie for several days, and dared not call at the house to inquire for her; it was, therefore, with most pleasurable surprise that he had opened a delicate little envelope, which smelled strongly of musk and was ornamented with a very fat little boy without any clothes, thoughtlessly pointing a beedless arrow at nothing, and read the following note:

"DEAR GUS:—I have been sick for three days; mother and aunt are going out to spend the evening, and Chloe will have to go to market, so I shall be alone until about half-past nine. Come up if you can. The gas is very bad, and the parlor is almost dark at night, come up, won't you?"

BESSIE."

It was nearly half-past eight when Mr. Fowler reached the house where his loved one dwelt; as he got near to it he threw away the remnant of his cigarette, hastily took a couple of cloves from his pocket, shoved them up a bit and swallowed them. He then smoothed down his shirt front as much as his rumpled condition would permit of, straightened his tie, gave a final pull at his collar to see that it was all right, ran his fingers lightly over that left puff to be sure it had not got out of place, tugged at his vest to make it lie smooth, gave himself a sort of a shake to be perfectly certain that everything was all right, and then rang the bell.

There was the tripping of light footsteps in the hall; the slight rustle of a dress; a faint suspicion of patchouli floating through the key-hole, and then the lat door was raised and—

Well, the door didn't open.

There was a slight sound of impatience on the inside of the door; a strong tug to open it—the door didn't seem to mind that;—and then there was a curious settling sound, as if some one adorned with copious crinolines had suddenly sat down; then came another rattling movement as if the same crinoline was getting up again, and at last a soft voice said,

"Is that you, Gus?"

"Yes, darling," Mr. Fowler used the word because he felt confident no one could not be overheard, and he also gained a little additional assurance from the fact of a two inch door interposing between him and the person he thus ventured to address. He had thought several times that he would like to call Beattie "darling," but, somehow when the proper moment for using the term arrived, he had always lost courage and had substituted some other word not quite as affectionate; but now, thanks to the interposing door he had gained courage enough to use the term, and he felt as if he had accomplished something, and mentally determined to try to use it again when there was no interposing door and it might lead to happier results.

"Oh dear!" said the voice on the other side of the door, "the door is locked!"

"Unlock it, darling," promptly replied Mr. Fowler, now fully making up his mind to use that term of endearment and no other.

"But I can't, Gus; the key is gone."

"D—n it," ejaculated Mr. Fowler; this word sounded a little, a very little, like "darling" through the key-hole, and Miss Beattie thought it was, but the more enlightened reader knows it wasn't.

"Oh, Gus," she said, "what shall I do; that old foot Chloe has locked me in and carried away the key. I cannot open the door."

"I can't crawl through the key-hole, darling," said Mr. Fowler with a desperate attempt at gallantry, but feeling that if Chloe had been present in the flesh, and he had a good bit, pocket knife, he would have liked to cut her up into small pieces and introduce her in detail into the aforesaid orifice.

"No, Gus," said Miss Beattie, "but—don't you think—perhaps—couldn't you try—that is, the window isn't very high, you know?"

"Of course it isn't," said Mr. Fowler, as the idea suddenly dawned on him. "I've climbed higher places before now."

"Then wait a minute until I open it, and you can get in that way."

There was another gentle rustle of crinoline, and the soft tripping of little feet, and Mr. Fowler gave a slight hitch to his trousers, just as sailors are popularly supposed to be constantly doing, and prepared to climb up through the window.

I have said that there was a low picket fence enclosing the few feet of ground in front of the house, and against this Mr. Fowler leaned in the most picturesque attitude he knew how to assume, until the window opened and Miss Beattie appeared.

How beautiful she looked in the dim, shadowy light with her golden hair framing her pure, girlish face all aglow with excitement, and the dim gas light—it was bad as she had said—throwing a faint beam of brightness over her. Very beautiful she looked, and very deeply in love Mr. Fowler felt, and he determined to exhibit his prowess before his lady love, as gallant knights of old were wont to do before theirs.

I have said that the picket fence was low, in fact it was about two feet and a half high, and as Mr. Fowler's left hand rested on the top he thought he would exhibit his powers as a

gymnast—he was a pretty good one too—and so he made a slight spring and vaulted lightly over it.

Oh, poor misguided Fowler! what made you change color so violently, and place your hand so suddenly behind you, as you alighted on the little grass plot? That treacherous pin had given way, his braces were again unfastened and his trousers in imminent danger of sagging down uncomfortably. There was no friendly servant maid at hand now; no way to repair the terrible damage, and he could only look up at the beautiful vision above him and sigh.

The window was about eight feet high, and Fowler could have easily sprung up so as to grasp the window sill and swing himself into the room; but, "what would be the consequences?" He shuddered as he thought what they might be, and he stretched his hand up, as if to test the distance, and said sadly,

"It's too high."

"Can't you jump, Gus?" asked Miss Beattie, who was rather hurt at her lover's apparent apathy. "I thought you could jump over so high."

"I could," said Mr. Fowler sadly, "but—I've sprained my," braces, he was going to say, but added, "ankle."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Miss Beattie leaning down towards him, and looking more like an angel than ever, he thought, "does it hurt you much?"

"No—yes—that is, not a great deal."

"I'm sorry," said Miss Beattie again, sympathetically, then, suddenly, "Oh, Gus! I've a splendid idea; I'll get the step ladder Chloe used to hang the clothes up and then you can get up without any trouble. Wait a moment and I will bring it."

The beautiful vision, as Mr. Fowler called it, disappeared, and he occupied the few spare minutes before her return in endeavoring to find the remnants of that treacherous pin, so that he might make some kind of temporary repairs, if possible; but no, no trace of the pin could be found, and he could only give an extra hitch or two to his trousers, and await Miss Beattie's return.

She soon came, and tears almost stood in her bright little eyes as she said,

"I declare it's too bad, Gus, that hateful old Chloe has locked the door at the bottom of the stairs leading to the kitchen, and I cannot get the steps to help you up; I'm so sorry."

She leaned far out of the window, and he drew himself together as if for one desperate spring, for one moment he hesitated, then prudence prevailed over rashness and he contented himself with reaching up to her and trying to take her hand. She held it down provokingly near him and he seized the plump little palm in his and gently squeezed it. The pressure was returned; he could swear it was, and he raised himself yet a little higher that he might press the dainty little fingers to his lips; his head was thrown back and his gaze fixed on the radiant face which glowed less than two feet above him; one more effort and he could reach her hand; his throat was swelling with the strain of stretching so much, but with a strong effort he raised himself a couple of inches, his lips were pressed to her fingers, he was drinking in sweet draughts of loving regard from her eyes when—"crack" went that faithless collar button, his "butterfly" fell to the earth, both ends of his collar started up under his ears, and he dropped to the ground thoroughly disheartened and discouraged.

Miss Beattie, who did not know the misfortune which had happened to him, was surprised at his letting go of her hand so suddenly, but she said nothing; she was just beginning to remember that it was not very proper to have a young man standing under the window kissing her hand, and that some of the neighbors might see it and report the fact to her mother, so she said,

"Gus, it's no use my keeping you standing there, you can't get in, that's evident, and it is after nine now and Chloe might come back at any minute, so I had better say good night. I shall be going to school on Monday, and if you like, I will meet you at school is over, at the old place, and we will go to Alexander's and have some cream."

Of course Mr. Fowler could make no response to this but "yes," he had not courage enough now to add "darling," his two misfortunes coming on so suddenly on him had rather dispirited him, and he climbed over the fence—he did not dare to jump this time—in a rather lazy, careless manner. He stood for a moment sadly on the sidewalk, half-irresolute which way to turn, and then fell on his ear a soft, silvery voice, saying gently:

"Good-bye until Monday, Gus dear."

How sweetly that word of endearment slipped from her ruby lips, and how delightful it sounded to the enchanted Mr. Fowler; his heart gave a great bound and he very nearly scaled the fence and made a jump at the window to steal a kiss from the sweet ruby lips which had uttered that fond word; but, prudence forbade, and he merely threw back his head and kissed his hand to her, saying gaily;

"Good night, darling."

Ah, luckless Fowler, his evil genius was pressing him hard to-night, for as he threw back his head the action made the loose end of his collar fly up and strike him in the eye which caused him to turn weeping away.

Mr. Fowler wended his way slowly and sadly down St. Dominique street; he chose the dark and least frequented side of the street—albeit both sides are dark enough, for that matter—and kept well in the shade of the houses

with his coat collar pulled up about his throat. He walked pensively down as far as Craig street and took a short cut across the Champ de Mars steering as directly as possible for the Richelieu Hotel. Arrived there he enlisted the good services of the urbane bar-keeper, laid out, and with his aid and assistance got himself pretty securely pinned up—two pins, crosswise, in the braces this time.

Then Mr. Fowler thought he would take a drink; having taken it, he concluded he wanted a smoke, took a cigar and sat down to enjoy it; after a little while he concluded he would take another drink and did so.

I am afraid Mr. Fowler's disturbed and uneasy state of mind had rather interfered with his usual steady and sober habits, for, on the entrance of some acquaintances he insisted upon standing drinks round on the ground that he was "just going to have one." After that one others followed, and when Mr. Fowler left, in company with his friends, about ten o'clock, he was very doubtful whether there was only one St. Vincent street for him to walk up or two; if he shut one eye and took a good square look he could only see one; but, every time he looked with both eyes he could see two, and one of them seemed to be performing a slow waltz around the other; which was moving and which was standing still he could not quite determine, any more than he could make up his mind which was the nearest way home for him to take, the one that moved or the one that stood still.

It was very puzzling to settle this question, and Mr. Fowler leaned up against the house so that he might think about it at his leisure; what bothered him most was when he shut the left eye and saw one street standing still, it would begin to move as soon as he opened the right eye; but if he looked with the right eye he could see a stationary street which immediately began moving when he opened the left eye; that was what he could not settle to his satisfaction, whether it was the street he saw with his right eye that was moving, or whether it was the one he saw with his left, and so he leaned against the wall to think about it.

He was not, however, permitted to remain there long for, one of his companions who was sober, took him by the arm and pulled him forward.

"Come on, Gus, old boy," he said. "I had no idea you were so bad as this."

"Tahall tite," replied Mr. Fowler, "I'm ver-ry sober; on I couldn't tell which street to go to."

"What on earth have you been drinking to get you so tight in such a hurry. I never saw you so before. What did you drink?"

"Braces," replied Mr. Fowler, contentiously.

"What?"

"An' collar butt'n."

"I think you must be going mad," replied his companion. "Here boys," to the others, "call a cab and let us take him home."

A cab was speedily brought and Mr. Fowler and his companions got in. Mr. Fowler recovered quite as rapidly as he had been attacked. His drunkenness seemed to be of that evanescent kind which will partially prostrate a man for a few minutes, but rapidly passes away. By the time the cab reached Place D'Armes Hill he was more than half-sober, and protested against going home in such plausible terms that his companions, thinking he was all right agreed to his proposal to go down to Freoman's and have some oysters.

After oysters—and a few glasses of "alf-and-alf" to prevent the oysters disagreeing with them—a game of billiards was proposed and the four adjourned to Chadwick's where they got a private room and enjoyed a quiet game for about an hour.

It must not be supposed that these games were played dry. On the contrary they were wet games, that is to say the losers of each game had to pay for drinks, there were not many drinks, because there were not many games; but Mr. Fowler conceived a passionate desire for brandy cock-tails, and not content with the regular drinks on each game indulged in several "drinks between drinks," which tended to make his playing rather peculiar.

Wonderful billiards did Mr. Fowler play, and marvellous were the shots he made. The principal difficulty seemed to be that he saw too many balls on the table, he never saw less than seven or eight, unless he shut one eye and then he invariably missed, and the extraordinary manner in which the balls managed to run about the table without hitting each other greatly surprised him. Still he was not discouraged, and, altho' he seldom made a shot, and rarely struck anything but the cushion, he was hopeful and confident to the last, and felt fully persuaded that when he "got his hand in" he could do wonders.

But altho' he could do nothing with the balls he did wonders with the chalk, every time he missed a stroke he chalked his cue, not content with chalking the tip he covered it half way up its length with a thick coat of chalk; he chalked his butt; he chalked his hand clear up to his wrist; he chalked the cushion every time he had to rest his hand on it; he chalked the bridge whenever he had to use it; he chalked his trousers and his nose, and once, in a fit of partial abstraction, he meditatively began chalking his head until he had introduced a large premature patch of grey hairs.

Still he wasn't drunk. Oh, dear no! He said he wasn't, and he ought to know. He kept his legs well, however, walked about all right, and talked pretty reasonably; his face was very much flushed, and his eyes looked as if they had been boiled and had not got thoroughly