

Grumpy Played Billiards

Such a solemn-looking man hadn't come into the Howland house before within any one's recollection.

He looked less mournful, though, after taking the green and yellow tippet from around his neck, and putting his ear muffs in his pocket.

He looked around a spell, and said to Baldy, the landlord:

"I see you haven't any pool table."

Baldy said no, he hadn't.

"And it ain't likely that Bill Summerdyke will be in here by and by?"

"I don't think it is."

"You know Bill, don't you?"

"Never heard of him before."

"No? Then the chances are that you don't know Sam Selfridge."

"Never heard of him, either."

"Then I'll set down and rest awhile. If it ain't likely that Bill will come in it ain't likely that Sam will. Pool tables and Bill Summerdyke and Sam Selfridge would only increase my sadness. To me a bitter memory goes along with pool and Bill and Sam. A bitter memory."

Baldy, the landlord, said it was too bad. The solemn man toyed with his tippet and sighed. Then after a while he said:

"I s'pose you've got some?"

"Plenty of it," replied Baldy.

"Make it hot," said the solemn man. "And put a baked apple in it. I like it that way."

It was made hot, with a baked apple in it. The man was right. He liked it that way. He put the goblet down empty, by and by, wiped his mouth with his tippet, and sighed again. It wasn't long, though, before he spoke up and said:

"Has it got over here yet about Grumpy?"

"Not yet," said Baldy, the landlord.

"I thought maybe it hadn't, things look so cheerful around here. You've heard of Grumpy, of course?"

"Grumpy? Grumpy? What was his first name?"

"Grumpy was his first name. And Grumpy was his last name. Grumpy was all the name he had. He was a dog. A bulldog. He was mine. And he would be mine yet if it hadn't been for pool and Bill Summerdyke and Sam Selfridge. There wasn't a better pool player in New Jersey than Grumpy, and—"

"What's that?" said Baldy, the landlord, sharp and snappy, and looking with suspicion on the solemn man, who sighed and said:

"Grumpy was the best pool player in New Jersey, I said. He could—but I see you never heard of Grumpy. I will tell you about him. Then you will know."

"I raised him from a pup. I won't dwell on the smartness he developed in a general way, for you would think I was lying. You couldn't help it, some of the things he did were so amazing. I will simply refer to the genius he developed after Sam Selfridge put in that pool table."

"Grumpy seemed to find new life in that pool table. The click of the balls pleased him more than his dinner. He hung around Sam's, watched the games and got so he would howl with joy over a good shot."

"I was just tickled to death to see him, and, although I wasn't so much surprised when one day I saw him giving evidence that he was picking up a few things worth knowing, I was highly gratified. I heard the balls clicking one day, and peering through the door to see who was playing I saw Grumpy lustily knocking the balls about with his paws."

"I didn't think anything about it until I had stood there a few seconds and watched him. Then I was pleased, I tell you. Say, he was pocketing balls like a professional."

"Such combinations, such cross-table, cushion hits, such bank shots as Grumpy was getting away with were enough to make a champion jealous. It was a pleasing sight, indeed. It was worth going miles to see."

"I just stepped up to that pool table and grabbed a cue. I couldn't help it. And Grumpy yelled with joy. He beat me three straight games so quick that I hardly got a shot, and they counted me a little the best pool shot in the whole of Pochuck spread of waters at that. Then that amazing dog played fifteen balls to my six and beat me, and I quit."

"That was Grumpy. Folks used to come from all over to see him beat all comers. That's the way Bill Summerdyke took to coming here. Bill was a sport, and he knew tricks that made him talked about."

"I knew how slick he was, and I ought to have known better, but when he offered to bet me \$100 one night that he could pocket the one ball, the fifteen ball and the cue ball all in one pocket the third shot after

the break I took him up, pay or play."

"Grumpy had kept pulling my coat tails and growling at me all the while we talked about the bet, and if I hadn't been having some that night I'd have seen at once that Grumpy was dead set against my making the bet. He had seen Bill Summerdyke do the trick time and again, but I never had."

"But I'd been having some, and I paid no heed to Grumpy and made the bet. And if you will make it hot and put some baked apple in it I will have some now."

All of which having been done the solemn man resumed:

"I made the bet, and Grumpy went growling into a corner and turned his back on the whole business. Bill Summerdyke made one shot. Pete Goble was going after coons that night and came and called me out to see if I wouldn't go along."

"While I was out, Bill and Sam went to the other room to take some, and they got back to the table the same time I did. Bill he took up his cue to make the last shot and he stopped."

"See here," he said, "where's the one ball?"

"The one ball was missing, sure enough, but I was onto Bill's game, I thought, in a flash. He was full of tricks."

"William," he said, "this won't do. You can't go and swipe a ball like that so as to make the bet a draw. Not on me you can't. Play or pay!"

"There was some warm words, but I am a little handy with my hands when there is nothing weighting my spirit down, and Grumpy got up and came on the scene in a way that wasn't likely to be pleasant for Bill, so he paid the bet and went away madder than a wildcat."

"I wish Bill Summerdyke hadn't come over that night. Then pool and him and Sam Selfridge wouldn't be a bitter memory."

"I felt so good over beating Bill at his trick that I had quite a little more before I went home, and Grumpy actually howled with joy. It almost fetches tears to me, I tell you, when I think of it, for the next morning I found Grumpy curled up dead as a stone hammer. Yes, sir, dead as a stone hammer."

"Joe," said I to Joe Cobb, the horse doctor, as soon as I could find words, "what ailed that dog?"

"Joe went to work at Grumpy and found out. The missing one ball was in Grumpy's maw. Grumpy had swiped the ball that night and swallowed it while we were all out, so that I wouldn't lose my money. Grumpy's head and heart were all right, and if his digestion had only been equal to the occasion pool and Bill and Sam wouldn't be a bitter memory to me now."

The solemn man wrapped his tippet about his neck, readjusted his ear muffs, rose with a sigh and went out. Baldy the landlord thought it over a while and then said:

"And I only charged him 20 cents for them two hot apple toddies!"—Ex.

Both Were Killed.

"While I was trapping in California, I had an experience with bears which puts the average bear story to shame," said Ananias. "I was capturing live bears for shows and museums, and I think my method is worth speaking about, for it was original and very effective."

"I would find a big hollow tree in the forest, near low swampy ground, where there were lots of berries, for that is the ideal location for bears. I would drive long, sharp spikes through the outer shell of the tree, with the point sloping down, forming a passageway which would permit the downward passage of a large body, but would effectually obstruct its upward course. Then I would drive several bars through the tree about four feet from the ground, making the interior appear like a circular grate. The next and final move was to place a large cake of honey in a deep wire basket-like frame, with its rim nailed tightly to the inside of the tree about three feet from the top. Honey always proves the downfall of old Bruin."

"Then my trap was ready."

"I would saunter around the berry patches, and when I would see a well-built bear I'd throw rocks at him until it got angry and came for me. Then I had to leg it to my tree trap. I would judge the distance well, so I always reached the tree first."

"With the bear close at my heels I would climb the tree, up one side and down the other. Never in my career would I have to go further than the ground beneath the tree, for

when the bear reached the top he always stopped for lunch."

"It was amusing to watch their actions. They would try with one foot and then another for that honey and, as a last resort, they would try to reach it with their nose."

"Here was my opportunity, throwing off my shoes, I would ascend the tree very quietly and as I neared the top I would give the bear a heavy push, which would send him head first into the hole. As he hit the bars at the bottom he would attempt to climb out, only to be caught by the spikes."

"Then all I had to do was to nail a cover on to my trap, saw it off below the bars, hitch a team to it and drag it into town and ship it away."

"One day I was teasing a big grizzly and had him almost angry enough to fight, when a big black bear came waddling along. The two of them, as if by mutual agreement, started for me at the same time and the way I hit the high places was a caution."

"I had just rounded a little turn in the trail, when I saw to my horror that there was a black bear already at the honey, while a big brown bear was standing at the foot of the tree, as if undecided whether or not to climb. Seeing me coming, it started for me with a growl that rumbled like distant thunder. Men think rapidly at such times, and although my knees knocked together so violently that the crystal on my watch was broken and the ice-cold sweat froze on my clothes, I planned a way of escape."

"Glancing backward and forward alternately, slowing down and increasing my speed, I calculated so well that when the brown bear in front and the grizzly, which was in the lead behind, were within a few inches of reaching me, I sprang aside and they came together with a shock that shook the ground so that the bear that was reaching for the honey was sent headlong into the trap; both bears were killed in the collision."

"Without losing a second, I bounded along with the black bear close at my heels. I reached the tree, scrambled up. I could hear the bear's hot breath on my shoes as I reached the top of the tree. Down the other side I slid and while the last of the bears nosed around in the hole I gave the tree an awful shake and

stood master of all I surveyed."

Surely truth is stranger than fiction.—Ex.

Gold Found on a Farm

Colfax, March 15.—Word comes from Oakesdale that gold has been discovered on the farm of J. P. Crawford, four miles southwest of Oakesdale on a branch of Thorn Crew. The discovery was made by C. L. Craig and R. H. Johnston, two old miners and prospectors, who have worked in the Black Hills. They kept the discovery quiet until they had contracted with Mr. Crawford and his wife for a two-thirds interest in all the precious metals discovered, and this contract was placed on record a few days ago, when the matter became public for the first time. Mr. Craig, who brought the contract here to file it with the county recorder, says they found gold quartz that is very rich, and he is confident that the find, when thoroughly developed, will create a sensation.

Fishing for Ducks

In India an ingenious scheme is practiced for taking ducks on a line, which is attached at one end to a flexible stick stuck up in the mud, the other extremity having a double pointed needle of bone attached to it. The latter is baited by stringing upon it some grains of corn. Presently along comes Mr. Duck, swallows the needle and finds himself a captive the moment he tries to fly away. In olden times the Cape Cod fishermen depended largely for bait upon the seawolf they took on their voyages. To catch them they threw out fishing lines with hooks on the end, to which were attached chunks of cod liver. The latter floated because of the oil they contained, and murrets, gulls and other birds swallowing them were quickly pulled in, skinned and chopped up.—Ex.

How He Fooled the Dog.

A gentleman who is fond of studying wild animals in their natural surroundings once had an opportunity of seeing for himself an example of the cunning for which the fox has become proverbial.

As he was standing near the bank of a river one winter day, he saw a fox run out upon the ice and make straight for a hole. At the edge of the opening he stopped, turned, followed his tracks back to the bank,

ran down the stream and paused to await developments.

In a little while a dog came tearing out of the woods, with his nose close to the ice and snow. He ran along the ice with his head down, following the scent until he reached the opening. It was then too late to check his speed. He plunged into the water and was lost under the ice. The fox meantime had waited in plain sight to watch the effect of the little trick. After the dog failed to view the fox remained perfectly motionless until he saw his old enemy disappear. Then, with a grin on his face which seemed to combine a good natured grin with a mild contempt, he went unobtrusively off about his business.—Ex.

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