

BRIC-A-BRAC.

THE SIEGE OF THE SMOKING-ROOM.

A True Story.

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ONCE upon the ship 'Trafalgar,'
 When the wind was blowing coldly,
 All within the smoking-parlour
 Sat the chiefs of all the smokers,
 And they bravely smoked the peace-pipe,
 Smoked the calumet, the peace-pipe,
 Till the air grew thick and dusky
 And their eyes grew dim and smarting
 And their breath grew hard and heaving.
 Then they said, 'Behold, oh Brothers,
 How the blue smoke curleth upwards,
 Fills the room, and rusheth downwards
 Into the saloon beneath us,
 Fills it with its fragrant odour,
 Sets the people all a-coughing.'
 And they smoked till thicker round them
 Rose the smoke in densest columns.
 And they cried again, 'Oh Brothers,
 We have smoked enough for one time ;
 We cannot remain here longer,
 Or we shall become all smoke-dried,
 Like the bacon in the chimneys,
 Like the sparrows in the cities.'
 And they left the smoking-parlour,
 Left it dim with smoke and vapour,
 Like a chimney reeked and smoked it,
 As they scattered o'er the ship-board
 Each unto his own amusements.

Then without arose the ladies,
 Walking in the chilly evening,
 Walking in the rain and drizzle,
 In their sea-coats and sou'-westers ;
 And they said to one another
 'We will go into the parlour,
 We will sit within the smoke-room,
 And will read some strange adventure,
 Some old story or tradition,
 That the hours may not be wasted,
 That the time may pass more gaily
 And we all be more contented.'
 And they went into the smoke-room,
 Read a tale of strange adventure,
 That the hours might not be wasted
 That the time might pass more gaily
 And they all be more contented.
 Then below the chiefs assembled, —
 They, the chiefs of all the smokers —
 And they said to one another,
 "We shall lose our smoking-parlour,
 Smoke the calumet no longer
 In the room, the smoking-parlour.'
 And they all cried out together,

We must drive them from the parlour,

Lest they take it altogether,
 And we smoke our pipe no longer
 In the room, the smoking-parlour.'
 Then they gathered friends around them,
 Came around and shouted wildly,
 Tried to drive them from the parlour,
 Came and closed the ventilator,
 Held it with their fingers tightly,
 That the air might be excluded,
 That the smoke might gather thickly
 And their breathing be prevented.
 Then between the ventilator
 Gleamed a sharp and shining weapon,
 Pierced his fingers that was holding,
 Holding close the ventilator.
 Like a ball from off a bat-trap,
 Quickly he withdrew his finger,
 And a red drop dyed his finger,
 Dyed the deck with drops of crimson,
 While he shouted in his anguish,
 Shouted in the rain and drizzle,
 While around him swept the sea-bird, —
 Diomedea exulans.
 Then they left the smoking-parlour,
 Left them reading in the smoke-room,
 Till they gathered round the table,
 Sat in the saloon at tea-time.
 Then they all cried out, 'The ladies
 Drive us from our smoking-parlour,
 Pierce and wound us in the fingers,
 We can smoke our pipe no longer
 Smoke our calumet no longer
 In the room, the smoking-parlour :
 'Tis a room for smokers only,
 For the chiefs of all the smokers.'
 Then the ladies said in answer,
 'We have seats as well as you have,
 We can smoke as well as you can,
 Smoke tobacco rolled in paper.'
 And a lady cried exulting,
 'Aw'fully jolly cigarettes are.'
 Thus they argued all the tea-time,
 While the ship was flying onwards
 Swiftly through the spray and drizzle,
 And the fire-tail, phosphorescence,
 Followed closely in the darkness ;
 And the porpoise, the phocena,
 Shouted gambling in the billows.
 Thus you see the waves and waters
 Shall remember you no longer,
 Than the fire-tail, phosphorescence,
 Lies upon their shining bosom.
 You shall, too, forget your smoke-room,
 All your legends and traditions,
 All your sickness in the Channel,
 All your gambols in the tropics,
 When you reach your southern harbour,
 Smoke your calumet in Sydney,
 In the land of the hereafter.