

CHANGED THE OVERCOATS

Changed Fixtures of Their Respective Owners.

Mistake of a Garçon in a Cafe Had an Honest Man Within Power of a Snyster Who Oppressed Him.

An accidental exchange of overcoats in a restaurant one evening recalled a queer story to an old man who was dining at the other end of the room. One evening in the early seventies," he said, "a garçon, hurrying through a crowded cafe very far from here knocked down a man who had been hanging above a pile of overcoats on a wall rack. I picked them up and restored them to the man and by that simple act connected a very estimable gentleman to a man of acute mental torment and another individual, considerable as estimable, on a road that eventually led to a suicide's grave. I don't know either man from the house cat. If he had been told of the trouble he caused, he probably would have had a stroke of apoplexy. I remember being told that rather fat.

"I am something of a student of history," continued the old lawyer, "and I have frequently amused myself tracing out the extraordinary consequences of some apparently trivial incident. It is nearly always the shifting of a pebble that brings down the empires of social life, and in this case I will briefly sketch the facts, as you may draw your own conclusions.

The fat garçon, as a matter of fact, hung the hats over the wrong coats, and a few minutes afterwards a young fellow who had just finished his dinner got up and walked off with another man's overcoat. By an coincidence it was so much like the man that he wore it for a week without discovering the change. Then one day he felt in the inside pocket and pulled out several letters that were addressed to him. I think I could repeat the contents even now from memory. There are professional reasons why I cannot be very explicit. Suffice it to say that they put him in possession of certain facts, partly of a commercial and partly of a personal nature, that led absolutely ruin for the man whom they concerned.

"As I have already hinted, the young man who stumbled into this information was not a very estimable character, but had plenty of nerve and shrewdness, and he began at once to plan how he would turn his discovery into cash. While the other fellow, who was a neat, middle aged business man, had had to observe that he was wearing somebody else's coat. I may say right here that he never found it out and died ignorant of a fact that might have saved him an infinite deal of worry.

"The young man was frigid to the point of being in rather a ticklish condition himself, owing to numerous transactions in the past, and his nerves might easily have turned the tables upon him. So he made a tool of his miserable old drunkard, who had been a lawyer, and they proceeded to put on the screws. The business man had missed the letters, of course, but he hadn't the faintest idea of how they had lost them and imagined that they had been stolen out of his coat at the office, and that theory, by the way, resulted in the abrupt discharge of several entirely innocent and unsuspecting employes.

"When the ex-snyster approached him, he promptly flew into a panic and hid the first installment of blackmail without a protest. What followed was somewhat commonplace," said the old lawyer mischievously, "and I merely skeletonize it. In a year or so the ex-snyster succumbed to prostrations, complicated with jitters, and the man with the letters had to get a new outspan. He picked up a queer looking character who had been a sort of a doctor and all around fakir. This fellow knew nothing of the facts, but merely acted as a go between and appeared at intervals with a card in which a certain amount would be scribbled in pencil.

"It seems incredible, but this went on for three solid years. Then one day the victim got desperate and did what he should have done at first. He came to my office and made a clean breast of the whole affair. I took the fellow by the horns. To begin with, I quickly got out a warrant for the fake doctor, and when he appeared I gave him 30 seconds to furnish the name of his principal. That secured, I went out a second warrant and went after the young man myself. "I want those documents," I said, "and also your signature to this confession. He blustered a good deal, but my bluff was the stronger, and inside of 10 minutes I had what I came after. He told me he had found the letters on the floor of the postoffice, and I let it go at that. But I warned him that any

future attempts at extortion would result in his instant arrest. "There the story proper ends, but there is one thing to add—namely, how I found out the truth about the overcoats. It was very simple. My black-mailing gentleman had become a good deal of a wreck during his years of successful operation, and not long after I put a period to his little game his former victim died. That destroyed any lingering hopes he may have had of renewing the squeeze, and he came to my office one day and offered to tell me exactly how he secured the letters if I would give him enough money to go to Chicago. For the sake of clearing the matter up I accepted the proposition, and he related the incident of the cafe. It is undoubtedly true. He drifted north with the money I gave him, got on a tremendous spree and killed himself by jumping out of a window."—Ex.

The Car of Juggernaut.

Probably the grim story of the car of Juggernaut was brought home by the first European traveler who went to India. It has, at any rate, set the fashion for many later travelers, and no myth ever had a more successful career. Until recently the best informed writers of all countries have used Juggernaut and his victims as a stock figure, while every book about India has helped the tale along more or less. As a matter of fact it is nothing but a traveler's tale.

Juggernaut Puri is a town in the Indian province of Orissa and contains a temple which is visited by thousands of pilgrims yearly—the temple of Juggernaut or Juggernaut. The god's name is a corruption of the Sanskrit Jagannatha, meaning "lord of the world." According to an old Hindoo legend, a certain rajah sent a learned Brahman out into the world to find a place suitable for building a city. When the wise man reached the present site of Juggernaut Puri, he saw a crowd dive into the ocean, wash its body and make obeisance to the water-god. Luckily enough, the Brahman knew the crowd language, so when the bird had finished his worship he approached him and struck up a conversation. The crowd told the Brahman that if he would stay at this part of the coast the wonders of the place, whatever they were, would be taught him. Full of his news, the Brahman rushed to the rajah, and the latter built a city and a temple upon the spot. Eleven hundred and ninety-eight A. D. is the date of its building.

One night the rajah had a dream in which he heard a voice saying: "On a certain day cast thine eyes upon the ocean, and thou wilt see arise out of the waters a piece of wood 52 inches long and 1 1/2 cubits broad. Take it up, keep it hidden in thy house seven days and then, whatever shape it shall assume, place it in the temple and worship it." Another legend says that Viswakarma, who was a sort of carpenter in chief to the Hindoo gods, fashioned it into the present idol of Juggernaut.

Every year this god is placed upon a large car and dragged to his summer quarters. This ceremony is called the car festival and doubtless gave rise to the stories of brown folk throwing themselves beneath the vehicle's wheels. In 1881 Dr. W. W. Hunter investigated the myth while compiling a gazetteer of India, and upon going over records dating from 1586 to 1870 he found nothing to indicate that any human beings had ever sacrificed themselves. Such worship is opposed by Juggernaut's teachings, so it is likely that the whole story arose from a few instances of persons being accidentally crushed in the crowds of pilgrims who come to the car festival.—Chicago Record.

Ready to Compromise.

A very small pile of coal lay on the sidewalk in front of a house on A street southeast. A correspondingly small son of Ham was sauntering along and, seeing it, scented a job. He rang the doorbell.

"Am dat yo' all's coal?" he asked the lady at the door.

"Yes."

"Want it toted in?"

"Yes."

"Kain't I git de job?"

"Why, you're pretty small, and then you might charge too much. You might ask more than I could pay."

"How much is yo' got?" asked the small man of business. "Kin yo' raise a dollar?"

"Oh, my goodness, no!"

"Seventy-five cents?"

"No; run along and don't bother me." And she started to close the door.

"Mebbe so yo'll gib 50 cents."

"No, no; run along."

"I reckons yo' all ain't got er quah?"

"No."

"Ner a dime?"

"No, not even a dime," replied the woman, beginning to laugh.

"Well, how much is yo' got?" questioned Ham, showing his ivory.

"I sut'nly does-wanter git de job."

"I've got just a nickel."

"Well, I'm jus'-a-lookin fer nickle job." And he straightway began.—Ex.

Elegantly furnished rooms with electric lights at the Regina Club hotel.

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The Old Home Paper.

Noting the fact that many country bred men in the large cities take the local paper in their old home, the Philadelphia Record says: "The head of a large Market street wholesale business house, a man now advanced in years, has been a regular subscriber to one of the Bucks county papers for 50 years. 'He wouldn't give it up for anything,' said this man's son. 'He gets more real enjoyment from it than from anything he reads. A daily edition has been started within the last ten years, but he doesn't want that. He only gets the weekly edition, which prints gossip of a personal nature from the various towns throughout the country. He will pore over this by the hour, and his comments on the various items of news are often amusing. Scarcely a name is mentioned that he doesn't say, 'Why, I used to go to school with his father,' or 'I once licked his Uncle Jim for trying my clothes up when we used to go swimming in the Neshaminy.'"

A Famous Square.

There is said to be no equal in the world to the grand and imposing square of Paris, the Place de la Concorde. On one side of it is the Tuilleries, on the opposite side the Champs Elysees and on a third the river Seine. In the center stands the obelisk of Luxor, a magnificent monolith of red Egyptian granite, 74 feet high and weighing 500,000 pounds. This obelisk was one of two of the same shape and size, erected in 1350 B. C., by Ramses the Great at the entrance of the temple of Thebes. Mohammed Ali, pasha of Egypt, presented it to the French government, and in 1836 it was removed to its present position in the Place de la Concorde. The removal and erection on the new site required an outlay of £80,000 and the employment of 800 men, the obelisk being transported to France in a vessel built especially for the purpose. The Place de la Concorde is rich in historic interest. It was there that the guillotine was erected in the "reign of terror," after the death of Louis XVI, and it was there that the signal was given for the attack on the Bastille in 1789. Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were beheaded there in 1793, and it was the scene of great rejoicing in 1848, when France was proclaimed a republic. The Place de la Concorde has also been termed the Place Louis XV and Place de la Revolution.

Rattlesnake Poles.

"Years ago, when I was a boy at home," said a southern man, "an uncle of mine, who lived near Montgomery, was out on his plantation one day when he saw an enormous rattlesnake stretched in a furrow of a cotton field. He seized a hoe lying near by and made a pass at the monster. At the same time it struck out at him and broke off one of its fangs on the edge of the hoe blade. My uncle dispatched the snake and then picked up the fang and brought it to the house as a curiosity. It was sharp as a needle, and a faint yellow stain at the tip showed where some of the virus had exuded.

"The bit of bone lay for at least three or four years in an ebony box on my uncle's writing table in his study, when one day a stupid negro servant girl, not knowing what it was, used it to extract a splinter from her thumb. In less than an hour her whole lower arm was swollen, and she exhibited all the characteristic symptoms of snake poison. "My uncle had studied medicine and by prompt measures saved the girl's life, but for some mysterious reason gangrene subsequently appeared in her arm, and amputation was necessary. My uncle lost no time in burning his murderous relic."

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