

the long, sleepless, troubled night had done its work; she burst into tears. Flushed with angry energy, still struggling to frame her thoughts in words, she tried to subdue them. Oh, how foolish she was! She must be ill, she decided wildly. It seemed so ludicrous too.

"You see how sorry I am," she said at once, with the ghost of a smile shining for an instant through her tears.

He had stood and watched her without a motion. Suddenly he parted his set lips.

"Do you mean," he said in a low tone, "that you love me?"

She drew a long, deep breath of surprise; and all at once through her whirling thoughts it seemed to her that that surely must be the explanation of everything.

"I—I think that is it," she murmured faintly, still trying to subdue her tears.

Some minutes later the servant handed Mr. Macpherson a budget of letters, which he recognized to be all addressed in his mother's handwriting, and announced that his carriage was at the door. In the far north, where Macpherson was chieftain, many words were a superfluity.

"I am not going!" he said simply, in a voice that seemed to dismiss the subject for ever.

Mrs. Victory was now looking out of the window, but she had seemed to turn there very hastily as the man came into the room. He threw a rapid glance at her, and walked towards the door without a word. Just beside the long table, catching sight of the thimble, he paused, breaking into an involuntary exclamation:

"I am exceedingly glad that you have found it, ma'am," he said in a relieved tone, stooping over it. Mrs. Victory did not speak. "It is a pity that the gum has fallen on it, ma'am," he continued, preparing to pass out of the room, in his pleasure at the mystery of the thimble being cleared up, forgetting to be surprised about Mr. Macpherson. "I can clean it for you when you choose."

The gum! A light had come into Mrs. Victory's eyes. She went hastily over to where Mr. Macpherson's wraps lay ready for departure, and with nothing but a quick smile of apology pulled out the right sleeve of his flannel jacket, strapped on the top. Yes; there on the wrist was a large gum stain. As she held it up to him, her sweet lips tremulous with excitement, he too saw the stain, and as quickly understood.

Of course, gum had fallen on the thimble from Mrs. Victory's brush; he had stretched across the table for something, and it had stuck to the flannel sleeve. Then, very probably, he had thrust his hand straight into the depth of his capacious pocket, and when he drew it out again the cunning little thimble had been left behind. What a simple explanation of this stupendous mystery!

They laughed a great deal standing there together, Mr. Macpherson's blue eyes surveying the thimble curiously, although, of course, it was only because he was Highland and a little superstitious that he could have declared there was something eerie about the thing. That was what came of being blessed by the Pope, said he, just then on the high road to conversion. Of course it had brought a good deal about too.

NOT VERY BRIGHT.—"Do you think Sam Peters is a smart man?" asked one New York gentleman of another.

"No I don't, and I'll tell you why. I think he is not very bright. I called at his rooms, and on going away said to him: 'It is so dark in your hall that you can't see your hand before your face. A man might break his neck in the dark.' What do you suppose he replied?"

"I have no idea."

"He replied: 'There is no danger of that. I've put up a sign warning people to be careful.'"

HINT TO HUSBANDS.—"How does Mr. Manhattan Beach manage to have pocket money all the time, when it is generally understood his wife keeps the purse and only allows him car fare?"

"He plays a mean trick on her."

"How does he manage?"

"You know she has a pet dog that she thinks more of than she does for anything else in the world?"

"Yes."

"Well, Mr. Beach is in collusion with a dog-stealer, who steals the dog every week. Beach hands the dog over the fence to the stealer."

"How does that help him financially?"

"You see, Mrs. Beach offers a reward of \$5 for the return of the dog. She pays the money over to the dog-stealer, who gives it to Beach and he divides, and the next week they steal the dog over again. By this little game they accumulate two dollars and a half every week for pocket money."

MAYBE SO—Mrs. Walmsly is a widow. Her husband, who was a wealthy auctioneer, died a few months ago. Mrs. Walmsly has an Irish cook, who got married without consulting that lady.

"Bridget, what sort of a man is that you have married?"

"He is a very intelligent gentleman."

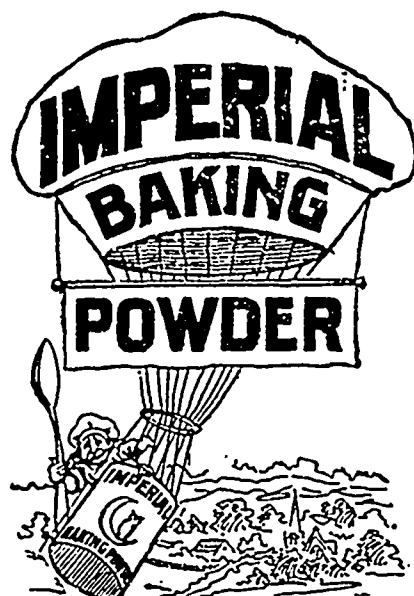
"Does he belong to a good family?"

"Indeed he does. He drives a coach for one of the best families in the city."

"Pshaw! A coachman isn't much."

"Maybe you're right, Widdy Walmsly, but I'm thinkin' a live coachman amounts to more than a dead auctioneer."—*Texas Siftings*.

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