

to the floor, and at the same moment a tobacco spit of liberal proportions plastered it before Bill could rescue it. Next instant the Scotchman was sprawling on the floor, while the other two panted and struggled around the room, overturning chairs and crunching broken dishes into the boards of the floor. The table went amid the crash of broken lamp chimneys. In a moment the room was a mass of flames. Hiram, who had regained his feet, and was vainly trying to keep out of the way, snatched the bedclothes from the bed in a corner, and attempted to smother the flames, while the two combatants, realizing the danger of the situation, rushed out with pails for water. A few minutes of brisk fighting and the fire was quenched. A lamp was found and lighted, and the three men stood awkwardly enough all wet and grimy, looking at the blackened floor and walls.

"I say now," said Sel, "we're mighty sorry this happened. But then I never meant to spoil that keepsake of yours, all the same. You thought Hiram did it, but it was me, and I never meant to; straight I didn't. Shake on it."

The men shook hands in silence. In a few minutes the embarrassment had worn off, and all were seated around the table, enjoying strong coffee and cigarettes.

"Weel, man," remarked Hiram; "ye have started in to celebrate the law suit early, an' no mistake at all."

"Just wait till tomorrow, though, and watch our smoke," said Sel.

"I've decided not to go boys."

"What!" they both exclaimed.

"Thunderation and lightning, that case is worth a celebration. It means seven or eight thousand dollars to you," said Sel.

"That's just the trouble," growled Bill.

His visitors exchanged glances of surprise again, and the Scotchman remarked rather testily: "Hoot, man alive, I do believe ye would'na tak' a day off for ye're ain funeral."

"Let's see," said Sel, producing a newspaper from his pocket; "this decision ought to put you on your legs again. You are allowed seven thousand dollars, aren't you?"

The expression on Bill's face was a picture to behold.

"But I've lost, haven't I?" he almost gasped.

Sel gave a long whistle.

"I see now; look here."

Bill took the paper, and, looking where Sel's grimy finger indicated, read:

"In the case of Stringer vs. the Imperial shareholders, Judge Melton handed down today a decision in favor of plaintiff."

Bill read no more, but dropped the sheet like one in a dream.

"Old Jenki...s told me I'd lost the case."

"Well, by Jove, that's one on you," exclaimed Sel. "The old beggar came around this morning asking fool questions, and among other stuff I told him you'd lost, just to plague him, you know."

"Too bad, too bad," commented Hiram.

"I never heard about it till he told me," said Bill, "and I just expected it would go against me like everything does."

"Weel, we'll leave ye to dream about it then," said Hiram, rising. "Ye'll gang tae Winnipeg noo."

Bill shook his head.

Both visitors looked their disappointment, but Bill was thinking of the letter he had mailed.

When the boys had gone and nothing could be heard but the howling of the coyotes, Bill did some hard thinking. Had he told Kate the truth, another letter might explain matters; but his foolish pride had given the letter a tone that could hardly be mended. If he had only not been in such a fearful hurry to post that miserable thing. But that was impossible. All night long Bill sat thinking.

The only feasible or practical course open was, evidently, to go East in person and do his best to laugh the letter off as a joke.

It was no easy matter to make arrangements for the care of the ranch during his absence on a day's notice. However, by riding night and day this he accomplished, so that a few days

later, he rode into the town of Arrow Road to board the eastbound train.

Having a couple of hours to spare before train time, he repaired to an hotel near by.

"An old man and girl inquirin' the way out to your ranch, Bill," remarked one of the loungers in the hotel.

"Yes," rejoined another, "they calculate to strike out there after dinner."

"Didnt know who they were?" inquired Bill.

All shook their heads.

"They're up in the parlor just now. Better go up and see who they are anyhow," suggested one of the group, whose curiosity had the upper hand.

Bill ascended the steep little stairway and soon found himself in the parlor.

"Kate! Well I'll be—"

"Now, don't swear, Bill, just because I'm here."

"But how in the world—" began Bill, when he was interrupted.

"Dad came out to see about a land deal, and I coaxed him to let me come along too."

"Aren't you glad to see me?" she added in a slightly aggrieved tone.

"But my letter; you never got it?" gasped Bill.

"Your letter; well, I guess; your letter! A nice one you are. Why I never showed it to a soul, or they'd never have let me come."

"Well, you are a little trump," was all Bill could say.

"I knew you were just discouraged and lonesome out here; so—well, I just came; are you glad?"

"Glad? It will take me all my lifetime to tell you how glad," he replied quietly.

"But that was a horrid old letter you sent."

"Never mind," said Bill, "that was a beautiful letter and a lucky letter, since it has brought you here."

A Lesson in Socialism.

Mike and Pat were two Irish friends and Democrats. One day Mike learned that Pat had turned Socialist. This grieved and troubled Mike, who said:

"Pat, I don't understand this Socialism. What is it, now?"

"It means dividing up your property equally," said Pat. "Tis this way. If I had two million dollars I'd give you a million and keep a million myself—see?"

"And if you had two farms, Pat, what would you do?"

"I'd divide up, Mike. I'd give you one and I'd keep one."

"And if you had two pigs, Pat, would you share those, too?"

"Now, Mike, you go to thunder! You know I've got two pigs!"

A writer in the "Outlook" tells the following story in connection with the dispute in the Hebrides between the Union and non-Union parties of the Presbyterian churches, in which the question of organ music played its part. "John, what is this instrumental music the folk are makin' sic' a din about?" one Scot asked the other. "Weel, Tammas," was the answer, "I'm thinkin' it's maybe the new-fangled 'peeng-pong' ye hear tell o'!"

A few years ago, when a Scottish Parliamentary candidate was canvassing his constituency, he called at the house of an aged couple. Finding the old woman alone, he entered into conversation with her and asked her to use her influence in getting her husband to vote for him. While they were conversing, the would-be M.P. noticed a kitten playing about on the floor and offered her five pounds for it. The bargain was struck, and on leaving he again expressed the hope she would secure her husband's vote for him. "Weel, sir," answered the woman, "as I said afore, John's a man o' his ain mind and does what stricks his ain noddle, but at any rate, sir, you've gotten a real cheap kitten, for yer opponent was in nae farer gane than yesterday, an' he gaed me ten pounds for its brither!"



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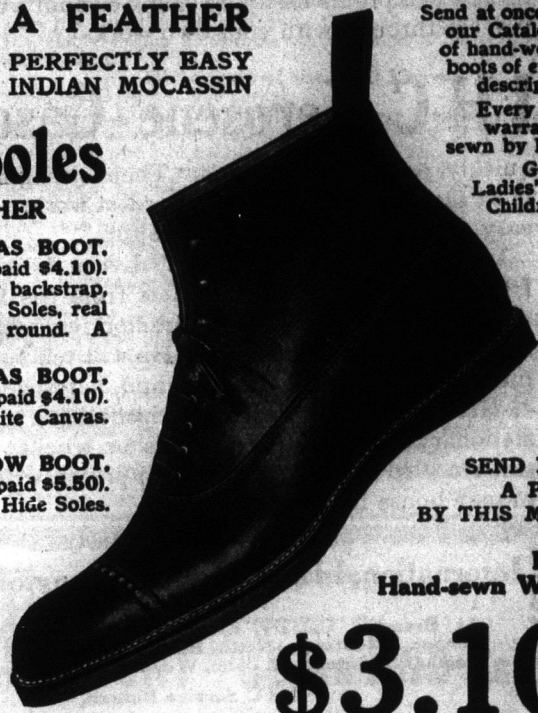
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