

QUITE A MISTAKE.

BY AN OLD BACHELOR.

Ah, well I remember my fair Anastasia,
The time the young maiden was sweet seventeen,
You might search the whole world clear from Europe to Asia,
And find none so bright as this young fairy queen;
She would play the piano
With her sister Hannah,
Sonatas of Mozart, and waltzes of Stausz,
Selections from Hayden,
This charming young maiden,
And raise up such a din
All over the house.

This was long years ago, and last night at a serious
Party of scientists, swells and their wives,
In walked a lady, close-voiled and mysterious,
Who looked as if she'd the most doleful of lives;
She took post at the organ,
I know 'twas a foregone
Conclusion she'd play us a wail or a dirge,
Or a wild *miserere*,
Sufficient to scare ye,
Like gales on "Ontary,"
Fierce sweeping its surge.

I looked at her face, and there sat Anastasia—
Her visage was haggard and silvered her hair!
Ah! poor Anastasia, Oh, how can I face you?
Your grief at my absence was too much to bear!
She looked up and knew me,
Said, "How do you do?" My
Husband will shortly be here. I'll be pleased
To make you acquainted."
I then nearly fainted,
A pleasant thing, ain't it,
To be undeceived?

MR. KRIPPS AND THE CAT.

"Is that cat in the house?"

Mr. Kripps might have made this enquiry before getting into bed. But he was a gentleman not remarkably distinguished for forethought—although in after-thought he could hold his own against any husband who ever undertook to worry a tired woman into an early grave. At least, this was Mrs. Kripps' unalterable diagnosis of the case.

"Maria, do you propose to lie there and pretend you do not hear my enquiry until, as a means of attracting your attention, I arise, have a trip-hammer erected in this room, and begin to play a select air on it with fog horn *obligato*?"

"Eh? Eh? W-wh-what, Samuel? Did you just say something? or was I dreaming?"

"If you heard me suggest the propriety of establishing a rolling-mills in this chamber as an experiment towards gaining your ear, you certainly were not dreaming. But without stopping to debate this point for fear you might lapse into somnolency while the argument for the negative was in progress, I shall proceed to put once more the original question, Where's the cat? Is she in the house? or is she out of the house?"

"Oh! (yawn) the cat, is it? (yawn) It strikes me, Samuel, that if she is *in* the house she can't be *out* of the house; while if she is *out* of the house it is not quite clear to me how she could be *in* the house. But, no matter, dear; we'll not stop to argue this point, either. So far as my memory serves me I think the cat is *out*. Now, go to sleep like a good boy, and let your weary wifey have one night's rest for a change."

"Well delivered, Mrs. Kripps! Capitally said! And that ought to settle the whole question. You happen to *think* the cat is out of the house and, therefore, I ought to feel entirely at ease! Because there is a dim suspicion haunting you that the cat is out of the house, it follows, as a matter of course, that I ought to entertain no anxiety whatsoever as to my canaries! Madam, you argue like a heaven-born philosopher, but in a matter of this kind, pardon me if I manifest a desire for substantiatory evidence, so to speak. James!"

No response.

"James!!!"

A grunt and a creak from the second bedroom down the hall.

"Ja-hames!!!"

The double-width pronunciation was not to be mistaken, and so the boy decided it was safest to halt and give the pass-word.

"Where is the cat?"

"What cat, pa?"

"I believe I am referring to the particular cat belonging to this house. Possibly you have an idea I am asking about the cat Dick Whittington owned. But really I am not. Is our cat in the house, my son?"

"I dunno, pa! I guess so! 'Taint very cold out doors enny way, and I kin let her in first thing in the morn', cos I'm goin' to git up early and go fishin'!"

"Mrs. Kripps, I suppose it would be of appreciable advantage for me to deliver the lecture just now, but I am resolved to prepare one and publish it in pamphlet shape, on 'the Heredity of Idiocy—on the maternal side,' specimens to be taken from the bosom of our family. Lucinda! Lucinda!! Lucinda!!!"

"Gracious mercy me, paw! What under the sun is the matter?"

"Briefly this, my daughter: Where is the cat? Neither your mother nor your brother appears to have the slightest idea as to——"

"The cat!! Paw, haven't you any pity? If that isn't a horrid mean thing to do! You know very well I had neuralgia this evening, and here I was just in a sweet sleep when your roars— No I *don't* know anything about the beast of a cat, and you might have guessed as much without starting and frightening the life out of a sick person and—and—and——" Bang! goes the door.

"I need scarcely observe, Mrs. K., that a more beautiful instance of filial love and respect than that just witnessed has never been chronicled in the history of happy households. Your daughter is a credit to both of us and to herself also. After this it would indeed be a skeptical one who doubted your rare capacity for home teaching and discipline, or her patient and altogether loveable disposition. Now I shall consult the hired girl as a last resort, after which I suppose I shall have to search the premises personally to ascertain whether the cat is in. I might have anticipated the eventual necessity of so doing at the outset of this enquiry—but I am living to learn. Mrs. Kripps, I am sorry to have to disturb you, but in order to reach the door it is absolutely necessary that I clamber over you, which act I shall endeavor to perform with all caution and celerity, if not grace and agility.

"If it will at all interest you to learn the results of my reconnoitre, Mrs. Kripps, I may say they were *nil*. Your hired help actually tittered when I first asked her about the cat, and that titter, madam, developed into a positive guffaw as she peeped at me passing by on my way to satisfy myself as to the correctness of her story that the cat was in the woodshed. If your husband and the master of *this* house is to be regarded as fit subject-matter for a hired help's silly merriment—, then, Mrs. Kripps, I say it is high time we had a definite and final understanding on the questions of our mutual relations. Ahem!"

"Eh? Who? What?—Oh! its only you Samuel, is it? But you did give me a scare, I declare! I was dreaming all about—but say, my dear, (yawn) did you—aw!—did you catch the cat?"

"I did *not*, madam, I am sorry but not surprised to have to say. There is no doubt in my mind but that the cat is in the house. I am further possessed with the shrewd idea that some member of this household has wantonly concealed the brute in the house, secretly hoping that while we are asleep she will find a way to devour my canaries. You will admit, Mrs. Kripps, that it is a poor case that I, in my own home, where I ought to find peace and contentment, and relaxation of both mind and body, am constantly made a victim of mis-

chievous persecution, not to mention cold disregard and studied neglect. If I were not a man of naturally good qualities—did I not boast christian forbearance and fortitude in a high degree—had I—But I shall postpone further comment. A snore is an argument I must utterly fail to answer. Take a decision in your favor this time, Mrs. Kripps. I have sustained with calm dignity a defeat of this kind at your hands before now. But you will repent of all your heartlessness some time or other. Yes, you will!"

"Before you go to the office, dear, I meant to ask you how about the cat. Did you find her?—I don't just remember what you told me last night. But I see the canaries are all right."

"Your solicitude, Mrs. Kripps, about the canaries does you infinite credit, permit me to say. Yes, madam, happily the canaries are all right. But it might easily have been otherwise. Yes indeed it might. I have no time to enter into elaborate explanations this morning. It satisfies me to know that for once, at least, I have been allowed to be pleasurably disappointed, while at the same time it varies your amusement at my expense, no doubt. Good-bye, Mrs. Kripps!"

"Jane, where was the cat this morning when you got up?"

"In the woodshed, ma'am, where I put her last night, as I tould the mashter. D'ye think I'd lave the baste in the house over night wid *him* to answer for fur it?"

LETTERS TO EMINENT MEN.

TO JOHNSTON B. McNULTY, ESQ., MERCHANT.



You are an eminent man, Mr. McNulty. Did the fact ever occur to you before? No doubt it did, and you have thought yourself hitherto neglected and unnoticed. Yes, Mr. McNulty, if conceit, arrogance, and egotism combined with the grossest ignorance on any subject, save that of "turning an honest penny," entitles any one to eminence, then Mr. J. B. McNulty you are exalted indeed.

You were born some fifty odd years ago, in the north of Ireland, in the vicinity of Belfast, in which city you first commenced your merchantile career as shop boy. You were industrious, assiduous and zealous in your master's interests, and honest too (it pays to be honest) You never filched even a ha'penny from the till, not you; you knew a trick worth two of that, for Belfast tradesmen keep close and accurate accounts and their eyes are the eyes of the hawk. True, on one occasion, you were accused by a customer (a poor woman) with having serruptiously pocketed a half-sovereign that she accidentally dropped on the shop floor; but she could not prove it, half-sovercigns have a strong family likeness, and as your employer lost nothing, of course it was none of his business to interfere. Whether you were "in" the half-sovereign, I won't pretend to say. The poor woman however was "out" that amount, for a fact. Be this as it may you went on and prospered. You became a salesman, and after some time a "bagman," or more politely speaking a traveller. You visited Manchester and other manufacturing towns of Eng-