



L. L. B. 56

RIEL-LY OBLIGING.

SIR JOHN (to U.S. Senator Blair)—“Er—I have noted your demand in the Senate for information as to Riel’s citizenship. I presume, of course, your object is, in case he was an American citizen, to have the United States liquidate the expense of his rebellion. This is very decent of you, Mr. Senator. Here’s the little bill.”

THE FALL.

Yes, everything falls in the Fall, dear heart,
With a crash as “by the board,”
But I’ll tell you a something, joking apart,
With your knowledge nuts to hoard.

Yea, all things fall, alas! too true!
In the country and the town.

But—the plumber’s price, and the coal man’s too,
Fall up instead of down.

T. T.

THE FAKIR IN ENGLAND.

LONDON, ENGLAND, Sept. 24.

DEAR GRIP—

You will doubtless be surprised to learn of my whereabouts, but having sold out my patent for a Noiseless Hand Organ to a sucker, I determined to visit the old country, with a view to biz. England is N. G. The people are the most unenterprising, stupid lot imaginable—no snap about ’em. They don’t catch on worth a cent. The place is as slow as a bar-room clock on a Saturday evening. No show for me; I shall come home.

For instance, I hadn’t been looking round more than a week before I saw a splendid opening for a real estate deal. It was in the suburb of High Digglesborough, near this city. The place is pretty well built up, but there is a big piece of vacant land planted with trees, and a stone fence about fifteen feet high round it, just in the outskirts.

I asked the barkeeper in an adjacent gin-mill who it belonged to.

“It’s part of the Dook of Digglesborough’s estate,” said the man. “The Dook belonged to a fine hold family, sir. Wy, I’ve ’erd tell as how they come in with the Con-

queror. But ’e’s pretty ’ard up at present. He lost a pot of money on the Darby, don’t yer know.”

“Thank you,” I said, “I’ll drop in and have a talk with him.”

A scared, wild look came over his features. My remark seemed to paralyze him for a second or so. As I turned to go he remarked in a low tone: “Well, I’m blowed. He’s actooally a goin’ to call on the Dook; he must be out of ’is ’ead. Shouldn’t wonder but ’e’s the cove as is wanted for them Whitechapel murders.”

The Duke’s mansion was close at hand, but I had some trouble in seeing him. First the flunkey asked me what my business was. I told him it was private; then he said the Duke was not at home. I handed him half a crown, and he said possibly the Duke might have come back.

He took my card and a message that an American capitalist desired an interview on urgent business.

After I had waited nearly an hour in the ante-room, I was ushered into the presence of the Duke. I was disappointed in his appearance and general get up. He did not wear a dazzling coronet upon his haughty brow; neither did a costly robe of ermine unfold his stately form. He just wore ordinary good clothes. He did not pace the apartment with a majestic stride, nor exclaim, “What, ho there, varlet!” to his attendant, nor ejaculate, “By my halidom!” nor act like a duke in any way. If any theatre manager were to put a duke like ’him on the stage he would be hissed off in no time. He was just a slim, elderly looking, slightly bald headed gent with spectacles.

“Proud to make the acquaintance of your Dukeness,” I said, hastily swallowing a quantity of tobacco-juice. I was afraid that if I discharged it on his carpet, it might give him a prejudice against me. “Will your noble Dukeness accept a cigar.”

“Thank you, but I do not smoke,” he replied somewhat coldly. “Will you kindly state your business?”

“Why, cert. I have been given to understand your Dukeness is somewhat strapped, as it were, having blowed in considerable boodle lately.”

“I—ah—hardly apprehend your meaning; I regret that my acquaintance with foreign languages is limited.”

“I mean that your Dukeness’ lavish and patriotic encouragement of the noble national pastime of horse-racing has resulted in a temporary embarrassment. Now I have a scheme to propose that’ll make you a solid Muldoon (excuse the metaphor). You have a large amount of real estate close to the town. Why not lay it out in building lots, and start a boom? Pull down your fifteen foot wall, run a few streets through, and put up signs announcing lots to be sold on instalments. You want to let a few aldermen in on the ground floor, so as to get the grading and paving of the streets done by the city. Then if we could give the *Times* and *Standard* an interest, it would help on the boom; we would of course need to publish the sales from time to time to keep up the interest. Naturally we put the figures considerably higher than the real amount paid. We must get little boom items about the rush to buy, and the intention of some man or other to start a factory in the neighborhood inserted, even if we have to pay advertising rates. You being a Duke, of course couldn’t be expected to be fly to the racket. But I can work it. Think over it; you’ve got a fortune in that vacant land. If you let me into it I’ll undertake to fix the aldermen and work the press and run the boom generally, either on fixed salary or a reasonable commission.”