

AN OLD LEGEND.

Once there was a man—so the legend runs—who had had on his hands for many years some goods of which he could not possibly dispose. He grew weary of seeing them, until it seemed to him that they were a heavier burden than the Old Man of the Sea, and that he was in sorrier straits than Sinbad. When the burden became greater than he could bear, he shifted it to the shoulders of the auctioneer, a resource from which poor Sinbad was debarred. A few days later, walking up the street and wondering with what he should fill the space left by the sale of his goods, his eye lit upon a shop window which impressed him as containing a choice selection of articles of exactly the quality and quantity suitable to his purposes. And he went within to secure them, but found to his chagrin and amazement that they were his own despised wares arranged with some sense of appreciation and harmony.

WHERE HE CAUGHT THEM.

It was in the smoker of a parlor car. Four drummers on a five-dollar-a-day allowance were telling tall stories of lavishness in spending money.

"I knew a man who gave a waiter a ten-dollar bill for a tip," said one.

"That's nothing," said a second. "I knew a man who invited his friends to dinner and put a hundred-dollar bill under the plate of each one for a surprise, and do you know where the surprise came in?"

"No," chorused the other drummers. "Where?"

"Why, at that point when the guests discovered that the hundred-dollar bills were counterfeit."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the chorus.

"Pretty good, that, boys, eh?" said Drummer No. 1. Reckon it put the drinks on me. Well, give your orders and we'll listen to the next lie."

"Gentlemen," said a weak-voiced, mild-mannered representative of the dry goods trade, "I had a brother who used to amuse himself by knocking the diamonds out of his rings and burning them up."

The weak-voiced man paused and the drummers gulped down their drinks, each trying to think of some way of crushing this outrageous little liar.

"Bet you five to one he never burned a diamond," exclaimed one.

"Bet you four to one, diamonds won't burn."

"Bet you three to one he never knocked a diamond out of a ring."

"I'll take odds you never had a brother."

"Gentlemen," answered the weak-voiced drummer, in even a weaker tone than usual, "I accept all your bets, the unit being \$5. Here is my roll," and he pulled forth a well-stuffed wallet. "Kindly put up yours."

The drummers "put up" in silence. Then their mild-mannered comrade continued: "Gentlemen,—My brother is the professor of chemistry in Stevens Institute. Every year in the course of his lectures he is allowed \$50 for the beautiful and interesting experiment of carbonizing a diamond by heat. In order to make this experiment more impressive my

brother buys the diamond in advance and has it set in a ring, which he wears conspicuously during the previous lectures. Then when the day comes for carbonizing the gem he loosens it from its setting before the class, and burns it to a dead and worthless mass of black cinders in an oxy-hydrogen flame. I assure you the experiment, as my brother performs it, is well worth seeing, and I will now trouble you for twenty-five, twenty, fifteen, ten and five, which makes seventy-five dollars in all. Thanks! You will now see, gentlemen, the advantages which even a drummer may derive from having received a liberal education."

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