

An Experiment in Gyro-Hats

(Concluded from page 18.)

four hours I remained in the centre of that platform, being revolved at an enormous speed, and when my father came home and stopped the platform I staggered and reeled and fell in a heap at his feet. That is how I acquired my unfortunate stagger and unpleasant reel, and I have only told you this that you may have no unjust suspicions."

"But why," asked my wife, who had been greatly interested by Walsingham's story, "do you not revolve in the opposite direction, and 'unwind' yourself, as we used to say?"

"Madame," said Walsingham, "I have. Every night, for one hour before I go to bed I revolve, but it requires an immense number of revolutions to overcome such a spin as I had in my youth." He waited a moment and then said: "But I am now ready to try the gyro-hat."

I looked out of the window, and hesitated. A thin rain was falling, and was freezing as it fell, and I hated to have a good, silk, gyro-hat go out into such weather; but as a leading hatter I felt that it would never do for me to seem small and pickayunish in regard to hats. I remembered that a really good silk hat should not be ruined by a few drops of water; and I saw that if anything could convince Anne and Walsingham that the gyro-hat held their happiness, it would be a trial on such slippery walks as the evening had provided.

So I brought down the hat and pressed it on Walsingham's head. Instantly the vacuum creator began to work and the hat clung fast to his head. He arose to his feet and walked across the parlor in a perfectly steady manner, and out into the hall. I held open

the front door and he stepped out.

Walsingham crossed the porch with as steady a tread as ever any man crossed the porch of a high-class hatter, but when he reached the top step his foot struck the ice and he slipped. He did not stagger nor reel. If he fell, he fell steadily. I can best liken his fall to the action of a limber reed when the wind strikes it. He inclined slowly, with his feet on the top step, and continued to incline until his head touched the walk below with considerable violence, and then his feet slipped down the edges of the steps until they rested on the walk.

I never saw a more graceful fall, and I was about to congratulate Walsingham, when he began to incline toward the perpendicular again, in the same slow manner. But this was not the reason I held my words. The reason was that the gyro-hat and Walsingham were behaving in a most unaccountable manner. Walsingham was revolving.

I discovered later that the fall had jammed the gyroscope on the pivot so that the gyroscope could not revolve without revolving the whole hat, and as the hat was firmly suctioned to Walsingham, the hat could not revolve without revolving Walsingham. For an instant Walsingham revolved away from us down the walk, and Anne gave a great cry; but almost at that moment Walsingham regained the upright and began to revolve rapidly. The icy walk offered no purchase for his feet, and this was indeed lucky; for if it had, his head would have continued to revolve none the less, and the effect would have been fatal.

I estimated that Walsingham was

revolving at a rate of perhaps fifteen hundred revolutions a minute, and it was some minutes before my wife was able so far to recover from the shock of seeing her prospective son-in-law whirl thus as to ask me to stop him. My first impulse was to do so, but my long training as a hatter had made me a careful, thoughtful man, and I gently pushed my wife back.

"My dear," I said, "let us pause and consider the case. Here we have Walsingham revolving rapidly. He is revolving in one of the only two directions in which he can revolve—the direction in which he revolved on the Mule Reverser, or the opposite direction. If it is the opposite direction all is well, for he will be unwound in a few hours, if his neck is not wrung in the meantime. If it is in the same direction it is no use to stop him now, for by this time he will be in such a condition of reeling and staggering that we would not have him as a son-in-law on any terms. I propose, therefore, to let him spin here for a few hours, when he will have had a full recovery or be permanently too dizzy for any use."

My wife, and Anne, too, saw the wisdom of this course, and as it was very miserable weather outside we all withdrew to my parlour, from the window of which we could watch Walsingham revolve. Occasionally, when he seemed about to revolve off the walk, I went out and pushed him on again.

I figured that by six o'clock in the

morning he would be sufficiently revolved—provided he was revolving in the right direction—and at midnight I sent my wife and Anne to bed. I fear Anne slept but little that night, for she must have had a lover's natural anxiety as to how all was to turn out.

At six in the morning I called Anne and my wife, and we went into the yard to stop Walsingham, and it was not until I had carefully walked down the porch steps that it came to me that I had no way of stopping him whatever. To add to my dismay I knew that when the sun arose the thin ice would melt, and as Walsingham's feet could no longer slip easily, he would in all probability be wrenched in two, a most unsatisfactory condition for a son-in-law.

But while I was standing in dismay love found a way, as love always will, and Anne rushed to the cellar and brought out the stepladder and the ice pick. Placing the stepladder close to Walsingham she climbed it, and holding the point of the ice pick at the exact center of the top of the hat she pushed down. In a moment a sizzling noise told us that she had bored a hole in the hat, letting the vacuum escape, and the hat flew from Walsingham's head.

Slower and slower he revolved, until he stood quite still, and then, without a reel or a stagger he walked up to me and grasped my hand, while tears told me the thanks he could not utter. He had revolved in the right direction! He was cured!

Comforting the Comforter

(Concluded from page 13.)

the cleverest little doctor in the province. But he knew it was pulling him to pieces. When the preacher had interrupted him he was planning a Christmas debauch. He had not yet taken the first drink when he heard his bell ring. He had only taken two when the preacher went out. Two meant nothing to the doctor. But now, instead of taking the third, he fell into thought.

"Now who," he demanded of himself, "who is it comforts the preacher?" He thought for a time and then he shouted, to himself, "His woman!"

His mind suddenly teemed with recollections of the shabby house the preacher kept. As a physician, Ned was accustomed to shabby homes, for poverty has a way of revealing itself in the bed-rooms of the sick. He remembered now the scantiness of the preacher's house, and he remembered the wife. Somehow or other the doctor had never been able to look into that woman's face—perhaps because it reminded him of a side of himself which he was afraid to remember.

As he thought of these things, Ned rose and put aside the bottle and the glass. Fishing among the rubbish on a top shelf he found his clock—a cheap affair with an alarm bell on top. It had stopped. He wound it and set it by guesswork. Then he wound the alarm and set it for an early hour. That done he blew out his light and went resolutely to bed.

But a few hours later, almost before it was light, the doctor might have been seen to emerge from his house, trudge to his stable for his horse, mount and ride away. At the door of the Rich Man's house he had trouble rousing anyone. Finally the Rich Man himself let the doctor in.

"What an hour to be rousing a body—" protested the Rich Man.

"Never mind," retorted the doctor, "You won't suffer for it this once. I've something important to say to you."

Wrapped in a blanket the Rich Man listened while the doctor talked. His interest grew with the moments. Presently he dressed and went out with the doctor—leaving the doctor's horse in the stable. Arm in arm through the deep snow they went down town to the shop of the grocer whose father the preacher had visited the night before. They roused the grocer and then went on in company to the furniture-dealer and undertaker. At each stopping place there were first sleepy protests, then interest, and then consent.

At each place they acquired bundles, and at almost every place some new convert joined the ranks of the little deputation. By eight o'clock there were ten men in that deputation and they made their way—slowly on account of their bundles—to the house of the preacher.

"Well?" demanded the weary parson through sleep-bleary eyes as he opened the door in the morning dusk and saw dim shapes outside. "What can I do for you?"

"It's—it's us," said the little doctor, "We came to see if the comforter didn't need comfortin'."

"Comfortin'!" whispered the preacher, still drowsy with sleep, "Comfortin'."

But with that the deputation had filed into his house and he had recognized them. Speaking softly so as not to wake the preacher's wife, who was sleeping, or the children, the Rich Man, the grocer, the furniture-dealer, the lumber-and-coal merchant, and butcher made their offerings, then filed quickly out again.

"But—but—but—" the preacher was trying to say, "But I—" then he picked up a note which lay on the top of the other things. It was from the doctor.

It said:

"Dear Dick: We've been hogs. This is just to show we appreciate a man when we have him with us. And to show we appreciate the person who stands behind that man—Tom Duffy (Tom Duffy was the rich man), has given me full authority to pick out the best rooms in the best sanitarium in the country for Mrs. Dick. Two months will put her back on her feet. And Tom Duffy pays everything."

A Hen Secretary?

He had worked for the farmer nine years, and was apparently contented until his employer added poultry-raising to his list of activities. Then he had to write on each egg, with an indelible pencil, the date and the name of the hen that laid the egg. One day he marched up to his employer and announced: "I'm going to leave." The farmer was astonished. "Why are you going to leave," he asked, "after working for me all these years?" "Well," said the man, stoutly, "I've done pretty near everything about this place now, but I'll starve before I'll go on being secretary to your old hens."—The Argonaut.

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