A BALLAD.

The Plaintiff was a homely Maid
Of forty years, or more,
A trolley car, it ran her down,
And she, of course, was sore.

The lawyer was a cunning chap
Who liked contingent fees;
He naturally advised the Maid
To nurse her injurees.

The damages the Plaintiff claimed
Were modest as could be:
She asked for fifty thousand pounds
Because she hoped for three.

The experts were disinterested,
So six they swore that she
Would die within a month or two,
Six swore the contraree.

The jurors, honest men and true,
They thought and thought and thought;
And then "For Plaintiff fifty thousand pounds" the verdict brought.

The jurors, tender-hearted men,
Before they sought their bed,
Each one, he nobly went and asked
The plaintiff him to wed.

Alas! Alack! Alack-a-day!
'Twas ever thus in life!
They found the Plaintiff—Maid no more,
She was the lawyer's wife!
—N. Y. Sun.

MRS. PELGROVE'S HAT.

By Herbert Jamieson.

MATTHEW PELGROVE strolled along the esplanade at Hastings, chuckling to himself. From a moral standpoint he had done a most reprehensible thing, but the circumstances were certainly mitigating. May not much be forgiven to a man whose wife has a shrewish tongue, and ideas of expenditure that by no means square with the possibilities of a limited income?

Three days previously, in the privacy of their home at Hornsey, Matthew had remarked to his wife:

"My dear, I find I shall have to go to Bradford on Friday."

Mrs. Pelgrove lowered the coffee-pot and glanced sharply across the table.

"Oh! Rather unexpected, isn't it? On business?"

"Certainly! Must see some wool people there before the next London sales. Most important clients."

"I understand. Shall I come, too?"

Matthew endangered the life of his cup by bringing it precipitately to the table.

"Impossible, Mary! Bradford's not a place for pleasure. Besides, I shall be fully engaged all the time."

That was what had passed between them. And this Saturday afternoon, when his wife believed him to be in the north transacting business, Pelgrove, the arch-deceiver, was bathing in beautiful autumnal sunshine on the Hastings promenade.

He wore a blithe and jaunty air. How sweet it was to capture, even for a week-end, the lost delights of bachelorhood! Did he not bless the comic paper that had first suggested to him this brilliant notion of duplicity, and resolve to subscribe to it for the future? The very day was in fitting accord with his spirit of hilarity.

At home Mrs. Pelgrove insisted on her husband dressing in harmony with the ideas of their genteel suburb, but here he had thrown (metaphorically) conventional attire to the winds—Indeed, it consisted of little but a white flannel suit, a red and orange boating blazer, and a sun hat worn at a rakish tilt. As Matthew stepped along, observing the varied life of Hastings, he persuaded himself that he had not a care in the world. He could even smile at his wife's desperate ambition to cut a social figure, and her bitter discontent that he was not making money fast enough for the full attainment of her purpose. Money—bah!—the word had an ugly sound. Nothing should be allowed to poison to-day his draught of pleasure.

Now, Matthew Pelgrove was not given to much exercise, and he presently became aware that, despite the lightness of his raiment, his lower limbs were beginning to ache. He would seek one of those inviting shelters where, shielded from the sun's rays, he might watch the people and indulge to the full his present sense of contentment.

Proceeding a little farther he espied a vacant place. That glass partition, dividing the seats on either side, would pleasantly shelter him from all draughts, and this corner seat looked most luxurious. The authorities really deserved—

But at that moment Matthew got a terrible shock. Sharply defined against the glass on the other side of the shelter was a hat—a hat reposing on a woman's head of golden hair. Matthew turned and literally ran from the spot. No one could mistake that hat—it was his wife's; he would pick it out amongst a thousand others. How vividly he remembered the sickening feeling with which three weeks ago he had regarded it, perched for the first time on her proudly raised head! Surely nothing so blatant, nothing so vulgar, had ever sprung to existence before in the millinery world. Through all the dark ages had feminine taste stooped to such an appalling confection of color? And the price—well, his bank balance suffered from it yet.

So Mary had discovered his scheme and followed him to Hastings. But how in the name of wonder—ah, he had it! He had stupidly mentioned his real destination to the manager of his office. Evidently suspicious of something, his wife had gone there and secured the information that had led her to appear in this quarter.

Out of breath with his unusual expenditure of energy, Pelgrove dropped his run to a walk and glanced furtively back. Thank goodness, that hat with the flaming, artificial flower-garden in it, visible for fully 100 yards with the naked eye, was not in sight! Mary had not seen him, then. He walked on hurriedly to the small hotel where he was stopping.

Arrived there, Pelgrove sought the smoking-room and put to the test the nerve-soothing properties of a good cigar. What an escape! He hated a scene in public, and that his wife evidently sought. Here at least he would be safe, for no one knew where he was stopping. As long as he kept well hid his privacy would not be invaded, unless, indeed (perish the thought!), his wife sought in turn every hotel in Hastings.

That evening Pelgrove made himself fairly content with illustrated papers. Next morning the sun rose in a cloudless sky and everything pointed to a day of perfect weather. He longed to venture forth—but, no. If he stepped outside malevolent chance would certainly send him straight into the arms of his wife. He could not even sit at the window and be fanned by the breeze, lest she should pass below and catch a glimpse of him. The scene between them must come, but better—far better—that it should be reserved for to-morrow evening, when their next-door neighbors at Hornsey (the Pelgroves occupied a semi-detached residence) should alone be edified.

Towards nightfall Matthew became exceedingly restless. As an additional cause of grievance not a speck of cloud had showed itself in the sky, and everybody abroad looked more than usually happy. Over a whisky and soda—the despairing effort of an abstemious man to revive his spirits—Matthew groaned. His impromptu holiday was not doing him the least bit of good. Better bickering at Hornsey than imprisonment in Hastings, with that dreadful shadow of the morrow hanging over his head!

"I don't care; I'm going out," he said to himself, when the sun had set and chances of recognition were slighter.

Pulling his hat well over his head and turning up his coat-collar, Matthew ventured outside. But despite the serenity of the night he did not enjoy the walk. One thought intruded—would he meet his wife? He peered into the dark corners of shelters before he passed them; a dozen times in the dim light other women's hats assumed the appearance of hers. When people streamed out of church and the crowd on the esplanade grew thicker Matthew decided to return to the hotel. This week-end at the seaside was an entire fiasco.

As he passed through the hall the young woman in charge of the office spoke to him.

"Some people called for you when you were out, sir."

"Oh!" replied Matthew, with ill-assumed unconcern. "Who were they?"

"A lady and gentleman. Said they had seen your name in the visitors' list. They left no cards."

"Could you—er—describe them?"

"I only spoke to the lady, sir. The gentleman kept behind. He looked rather seedy beside her."

"You can't remember at all how she was dressed?"

"It was too dark to see much, and we hadn't lit up. She had on a wonderful hat, though." Pelgrove started. "I couldn't help noticing that; it was so startling. What my young man would call a kind of conservatory with the glass left out. I thought it would hardly go through the door unless she stepped back sideways, but some women know how to carry that style of thing," and the young lady sniffed by way of slight contempt, and returned to her ledger.

Pelgrove had not moved. The blow had fallen; his wife was hot on the scent. But who could her companion be? Seedily dressed, eh? Probably some private inquiry agent whose services she had enlisted.

"Did they say—er—they would return to-night?" Matthew stammered.

"No, sir. Said nothing about that. Where shall I find you if they do?"

"I'm going to bed. I have—er—a bad headache. Have my bill ready early in the morning, please?"

Twenty minutes later Matthew was snugly between the sheets. Yet, even there, was a man safe from his wife? He listened nervously to every noise on the stairs, fancying her step in the tread of every chambermaid, and it was fully a couple of hours before he sank into unconsciousness.

* * * * * *

How Matthew Pelgrove transacted his business next day he does not perfectly remember. Even in the days of his apprenticeship he never glanced so many times at the clock. But with how different a motive! Then it was with the longing that some invisible agency would push on the slowly-moving hands and bring release from the irksome bondage of the office-stool; now that time might stand still, and that dreaded outbreak with his wife fade into unreality. All his self-possession fled as he thought of the evening hour.

If only he could frame some plausible excuse for his appearance at Hastings! Matthew, however, was not an imaginative man, and, rub his wits as he might, he could find no reason calculated to bear the faintest inspection. It would be too transparently thin to suggest that another man of the name of Matthew Pelgrove had been stopping at that hotel. Hastings was not a business center, and it was quite inconceivable that he should have arranged to meet a client there. No; the wisest plan seemed to be to brave it out. He must explain that, feeling a bit run down, he had changed his mind and, instead of going to Bradford, had proceeded to the sea—which statement, of course, had the essence of truth.

A little after the usual time Matthew left the office for home. More from force of habit than anything else he bought an evening paper, but he found himself unable to make sense of a line of it. His eyes wandered to his fellow-travelers in the railway carriage. Did any of them anticipate domestic storms? Had any of them wandered in similar fashion from the path of rectitude and purchased a few hours of enjoyment at the price he was paying?

The train drew up at Hornsey and Matthew found himself one of a crowd filtering out of the station. If only at that moment he might be lost to sight for evermore! When a married man did disappear in that way, was not his wife usually the cause?

He reached his garden-gate and glanced furtively at the house. Mary was invisible. He screwed up courage and mounted the steps. The housemaid opened the door to him.

"Is your mistress in?"

"Upstairs in her room, sir. She'll be down directly."

He placed hat and papers on the hat-stand. Never had he entered his house with such a peculiar feeling before. It was as though he had no right there, and the next moment would see him violently ejected into the street.

He passed into the dining-room and was fishing under the sofa for his slippers when his wife entered. He screwed up courage to look her in the face. Its expression confirmed his worst fears.

"Your're home," she laconically remarked.

"Yes. Things all gone well, Mary?"

"Not at all! Are you ready for dinner?"

"When I've found my other slipper."

"You're late," continued Mrs. Pelgrove. "Dinner's been kept back a quarter of an hour, and you know how cross it makes cook. I have something serious to say to you after it."

Personally, Matthew would have preferred having the matter out before the meal; it would act like a nightmare on his digestion. But he sat obediently up to the table and feigned interest in the viands, maintaining for appearance sake when the servant was present a flow of small talk, to which his wife shortly replied.

The meal ended and, folding up her serviette, Mrs. Pelgrove planted her elbows on the table. Her husband recognized the omen and trembled.

"Had a successful little trip, Matthew?"

"Yes, very—thank you!"

"You don't seem up to the mark to-night."

"A trifling headache. Traveling, you know, does shake one up a bit. That reminds me. I've left my portmanteau at the office."

She made no comment. Matthew played with a salt-spoon. He could not possibly meet her gaze.

"I've been dreadfully put out, Matthew. I discovered on Saturday—oh, it's too awful to speak about."

The blow was coming, and Pelgrove turned hot all over. Mary was clearly holding herself in. In a moment the storm would break in all its violence, and a poor man who had done wrong and knew it would go down before the blast.

"I was sitting at this window quietly sewing on Saturday morning, when an open fly drove by. Mr. and Mrs. Needham Smith were in it, and the coachman had a pile of luggage beside him. But what do you think Mrs. Smith had on her head?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Matthew, puzzled, yet relieved. "Something absurd, I suppose. A yachting cap?"

"No, Matthew; worse than that! Just think of the horror of it! A hat the precise image of my new one. Wasn't it a shock for me?"

Pelgrove saw daylight struggling through.

"Really!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "Where were they going?"

"I didn't know at the time, but the grocer's man told me afterwards. They were off to spend a week at Hastings. Why, Matthew, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing—nothing. I was just thinking what a burning shame about that hat. Mrs. Needham Smith has copied it, I suppose. Now I remember, she had hair much the same color as yours, and thought perhaps it might suit her."

"It doesn't, Matthew. She looks absolutely hideous in it. Oh, it's a scandal! I've not suffered from the house since. I was so upset. I shall never speak to that woman again. You are not laughing?"

"Rather not! I'm just as put out as you, Mary. When I've bought you a nice thing, it's too bad to find it imitated. What a pity for you women there isn't a law of copyright in hats!"

He felt like a school-boy again. So it was Mrs. Needham Smith who had given him the fright at Hastings, and she and her husband had been his visitors at the hotel. Now, fortunately, relations between their wives, never cordial ones, would entirely cease.

"I'm so glad you did well by going to Bradford, Mat. The fact is—well, I must get another hat now."

"Of course! You shall have one immediately. Go to a good Regent street shop! Mrs. Smith can't very well copy what you get there."

"Oh, Matthew, how good of you! We mustn't let the Needham Smiths cut us out. Could you afford to take me by-and-by down to Hastings for a little?"

She looked at him a trifle doubtfully, but his response was ready and eager.

"We'll go, Mary, in about a week's time, directly the Needham Smith's get home. Why, it must be seven or eight years since we went to Hastings—together!"—London Tit Bits.



THRILLING!

That is the only word that adequately describes the new story,

"Mystery of the Bayou Woods"

BY WALKER KENNEDY,

Which will begin in the next issue of this paper. It is a mysterious murder story in which the interest is maintained to the last line. It is worth your while to read every chapter.

THE STORY WILL BEGIN IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THIS PAPER.

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TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION.

Alpine flowers and plants are so quickly becoming extinct that strong measures are to be taken in the future for their preservation.

The estate of the late Thomas M. Jonas, the Pittsburg iron merchant, has been inventoried at over $1,500,000. By will it is divided into three equal parts, which go to his three children.

Capt. Charles P. Jayne, now residing in Boston, had the honor of commanding the first vessel that passed through the Suez canal. The craft was known as the Moning, and although of American construction was sailed under the British flag.

Joseph P. Nannetti, M. P., one of the candidates for the mayoral chair of Dublin spends the parliamentary recess in his position as foreman overseer on a Dublin evening paper, where, he declares, he is much happier getting out editions one after another than sitting in St. Stephen's hearing Saxon speeches.

There are four generations of female musicians in one Cleveland family, ranging from great-grandmother down. The youngest member is a tot of four years, who already is a prodigy at the piano, the three others being teachers. The names of the unique four are Mrs. A. E. Baker, who is in her seventy-first year; her daughter, Mrs. Alice Webster Baker; her granddaughter, Mrs. Nellie Webster Tate, wife of William Tate, and her great-granddaughter, Dorothy Tate.

Ex-Gov. A. S. Bushnell, of Springfield, O., recently gave a dinner party at his home to his family—including his two married daughters, with their husbands, and his son, with the latter's wife—and to the women he gave $150,000 each in stock of a harvester company, which pays five per cent., while to the men he gave $100,000 each of the same stock, making a total of $750,000. The governor afterward told a friend that he is worth just $7,000,000 after having given away his harvester stock.

OF GENERAL INTEREST.

According to the dispatches, the son of Balfe, the composer, has made an appeal for assistance. He hopes to secure money enough to buy a barrel organ on which he can play his father's compositions in the streets.

Rudyard Kipling was 38 years old on next to the last day of last December. The London Chronicle remarks that he is "perhaps the only living poet of ours who can claim royalties that are really royal. Publishers did not find much margin for themselves when they gave Lord Tennyson £4,000 a year for all his copyrights; but a single book like 'The Seven Seas' yields its author, according to popular report, even richer treasure trove."

One day recently the clerks in Senator Scott's committee-room were busy packing up and shipping Bibles and New Testaments to West Virginia. The senator had received a very pathetic letter from a school-teacher in his state saying that she was unable to secure copies of the Scriptures, and that the community was sadly in need of this kind of literature. Senator Scott immediately bought a supply and had them sent. He said that he did not wish the people of his state to want for the good book.

MEN WHO HAVE MONEY.

Alfred G. Vanderbilt has refused the colonelcy of the Newport artillery company. This organization was formed in 1741.

Russell Sage has finally given up his lifelong habit of visiting his office every day and is now seen there at irregular intervals only. He drops in during the forenoon, looks over his mail and returns home early, seldom attending meetings of directors of the corporations in which he is interested. His office work, making of loans, etc., is being attended to by his cashier and chief clerk.

Robert Winthrop Chanler, a member of the rich New York family, is in the state legislature as an assemblyman. Other members describe themselves as lawyers, merchants, farmers, capitalists, etc. But Mr. Chanler puts himself down this way: "Politics, democrat; occupation, gentleman." Apparently he intends to serve his legislative apprenticeship in gentlemanly fashion, for he has rented an entire hotel floor for the session.

THIS AND THAT.

The archbishop of Canterbury takes rank as the first peer of the realm.

Coffee is a very strong antiseptic. There are many diseases the microbes of which are destroyed by it.

After 20 years' service abroad, the First North Staffordshire regiment, of England, lately arrived at Southampton.

Portugal is the most illiterate country in Europe; nearly 68 per cent. of her population cannot write. In Italy the proportion of illiterates is 53 per cent.; in Russia, 36 per cent.; in Spain, nine per cent., and in Britain, not quite four per cent.

VETERNS IN LIFE.

On the United States pension roll of the Topeka agency is the name of a man who has served in three wars and is 100 years old. He is Thomas E. Sauls, of Webb City, Mo., where he conducts a little shoe shop and makes a living in spite of his 100 years.

Sgt. John Martin, the only survivor of Gen. Custer's regiment engaged in the battle of the Big Horn in 1877, has just been placed on the retired list of the army. Two hundred and seventy-seven of his companions were killed during the engagement.

W. J. Hannan, who resides at Corning, Tehama county, Cal., is undoubtedly the oldest active carpenter in the United States, if not in the whole world. He is over 103 years of age, but is still in good health and able to get around as lively and do as much work as many a craftsman half a century younger.

Squire Thomas Poe, of Rushville, Ind., has just celebrated his ninety-second birthday. He is still active and attends to his duties as justice of the peace with regularity and his decisions are regarded throughout the region as uniformly fair and judicial. He has occupied the office of justice of the peace in the town for 40 years.

THE LIBRARY TABLE.

A thirteenth century manuscript was sold in London the other day for $12,000.

Schiller's poems are particularly popular among the Jews, and not only in Germany. Translated into Hebrew they form the most popular reading among young folks in Poland and Galicia.

It is related of the late United States Senator Tabor, of Colorado, that when a friend asked him what he thought of "Robert Elsmere," he hesitated a moment and then replied: "I don't think too much of him; my idea is that the other side bought him up long ago."

Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson recently observed his eightieth birthday anniversary. He is in perfect health, and says he is happy as a school boy. The venerable author told his friends that he was especially grateful for two things—that he is not rich and that he has had the health and habits to earn an honest living in literature.

IN FAR-OFF PLACES.

Vienna is to have a lupus hospital, which will provide accommodation for the treatment of a hundred patients.

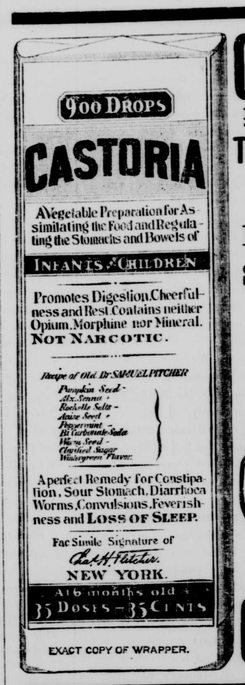
The Portuguese government is having a difficult time with counterfeiters of its banknotes. Their products are so clever that experts have difficulty in distinguishing them.

The governor general of Irkutsk wants a law restricting emigration of Jews to Siberian cities, on the ground that unless this is done they will soon own all the gold mines and have all the trade in their hands.

The Austrian government has undertaken to exterminate malaria on the coast of Istria. Several stations have been established at which quinine is furnished free and patients are carefully screened so as to prevent mosquitoes from spreading the infection.

In Grindelwald, Davos, and other Swiss resorts, the hotels have almost as many guests in winter as in summer. Sports are coming more and more into vogue. Until a few years ago they were chiefly indulged in by the English. This year the ski and other clubs have a varied international membership. The police force and military men are also being taught how to travel on skis.

Already Mayor McClellan's fame has reached beyond the Alps where lies Italy. His honor some time ago received from a subject of King Victor Emmanuel a letter in which the writer explains that he is an adept at thought transference. He says that a thought has been wafted across the ocean informing him that the mayor would lend him 1,000 lire for a short time. Since then two more letters have arrived from the same correspondent. Col. McClellan has figured it out that 1,000 lire is about $195, so he has done his best to transfer this thought to Italy. "Nothin' doin'."



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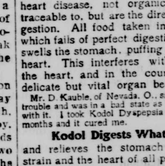
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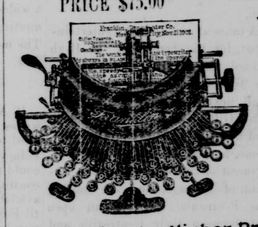
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