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IN HIS OWN TRAP.

Mr. James Fox was the junior partner in the firm of Plumley & Fox, the principal solicitors in the somewhat dead-alive old Cathedral town of Slumborough. He was a smart well set-up young man, of two or three-and-thirty, with carefully-trimmed black whiskers, a silken manner, and an unlimited flow of more or less entertaining small talk. Hence it came to pass that he was an exceedingly popular man among the ladies of Slumborough, both old and young, and, had his views lain in the direction of matrimony, he would have had small difficulty in inducing any bashful damsel or frisky widow to share his lot. But the handsome solicitor was ambitious; his share in the business did not at present bring him in more than a moderate income, and he had long ago determined that when he married he must consider not only beauty, but more solid advantages.

Heiresses, however, were not plentiful in Slumborough, and so, although Mr. Fox's attentions frequently fluttered a virgin bosom, he was careful not to commit himself too far, and not even the local gossips could fairly say of him that he had compromised a reputation or knowingly raised false hopes. There was, indeed, one young lady who had made a deep impression upon the solicitor's heart, but she was the daughter of a county magnate with whom poor Mr. Fox was not even on visiting terms. He had met her at the annual hunt ball, she had danced twice with him, for Mr. Fox was an excellent waltzer; but her mother had doubtless warned her against him, for when they met, some six weeks afterward, Miss Laquerton passed the unfortunate man without so much as a bow. Miss Laquerton, however, was lovely and rich, and Mr. Fox was not a man to be easily discouraged. He knew that if he could only afford to cut the office and blossom into a landed proprietor, he would have just as good a chance with her as anybody else; so he waited patiently in the hopes of one day discovering the road which leads to fortune and success.

The firm of Plumley & Fox was a highly respectable and old-fashioned concern which avoided litigation, and kept almost entirely to family business. Plumley was a fairly good lawyer, but Fox's legal knowledge was of the most limited character, and he was much too lazy to take the trouble to increase it. So it came to be understood between them that while Plumley did the office work, Fox kept the clients in good humor by calling on them apropos of nothing, and amusing them with his jokes and stories. This business was technically termed "keeping the connection together," and it suited Mr. Fox very well indeed. It was while he was thus keeping the connection together that Mr. Fox made the acquaintance of a certain rich old widow lady, named Mrs. Johnson, and so well did he play his cards that before long Plumley & Fox became Mrs. Johnson's family solicitors, land agents, and confidential advisers. The firm made a pretty good thing out of Mrs. Johnson. In accordance with the usual arrangement, Plumley transacted the business, and Fox became a constant visitor at her house, and worked his way into her good graces by his wonderful powers of amusing conversation. There was yet another accomplishment which stood our solicitor in very good stead, and this was an accurate knowledge of chemistry and medicine, which he had picked up as a boy in the shop of his uncle, the chemist. The horrible smells young Fox had created in his experiments and the ugly stains he had made on his hands determined him to forsake medicine for the law, but he never entirely forgot his early experiences. He could talk fluently about every known drug and disease, and about a great many which had not yet been discovered; he diagnosed Mrs. Johnson's symptoms at least as accurately as MacBolus, the Scotch doctor, and would even have prescribed for her had not the stalwart Scot angrily threatened to kick him if he did so. But he retained a very prominent place in the old lady's affections, and it began to be whispered about that he had an excellent chance of succeeding to her very considerable property.

The disposal of Mrs. Johnson's money was a matter which had long furnished speculation of unfailing interest to the town of Slumborough, and filled many a yawning gap in conversation at afternoon teas. Mrs. Johnson had but one relative in the world, Miss Lizzie Roberts, the daughter of her late sister. This young lady, however, it was agreed, had not the slightest chance of being mentioned in her aunt's will. A handsome, well-bred girl, she was left at her parents' death to make her own way in the world, inheriting nothing but the battle of life and the dislike of Mrs. Johnson, who had not seen the child since it quitted its baby clothes. This strange antipathy was traceable, as some people said, to times long gone by, when Mr. Roberts, Lizzie's father, then renowned for his manly beauty, had been an assiduous visitor at the house of Mrs. Johnson's parents. She being the elder daughter, and taking all his attentions for herself, had felt it keenly as a personal insult when her sister dared "to snatch him away;" and even later on, after having made a much more brilliant match herself, she never could forgive this early defeat. Death even had not buried the grudge, which not unnaturally passed from mother to child.

How far this saying may have been true or not, one thing was certain; poor Lizzie Roberts had not the ghost of a chance of ever seeing a single penny from her aunt's money-box; her claims were clearly quite out of the question. There remained, then, only Miss Nellie Brown, Mrs. Johnson's lady companion, and Mr. James Fox.

Mr. James Fox knew from his partner, who had cautioned him in a friendly way, that Mrs. Johnson was not going to divide her fortune, but would leave the whole of it to her "truest friend," though she had not yet made her mind up as to who deserved that title. More than once had Mr. Plumley been suddenly summoned to draw up a new will; so slight an annoyance as a cold cup of tea having caused her to destroy the one in Miss Nelly's favor. Then two days' neglect on the part of Mr. Fox, and a constant supply of hot tea at the hands of Miss Nelly, again reinstated this lady in Mrs. Johnson's good graces. Mr. Fox therefore had good cause for anxiety as to what would be the exact state of affairs when the old lady was finally called upon to join the majority.

"With such an old woman," he said to himself, "who is ready to make a new will any day and burn it the next, there is no dependence, one's future hangs upon a whim; a remedy *must* be found. The safest thing would of course be to make love to Miss Nelly; she is rather 'thirty-ish,' and altogether not very attractive; still, if she were to get all the money, she would be anything but undesirable."

So Mr. James Fox set to work at once to make himself agreeable to Miss Brown, yet without going too far; for he had by no means forgotten Miss Laquerton, but he felt it was better to have two strings to his bow, and therefore he determined to do his best to keep Miss Nelly in good humor. This lady, however, was not so easily satisfied as the solicitor expected, for now he had once begun to pay her attentions, she wanted a decided offer of marriage, and not being able to get it, she took refuge in a stratagem. This consisted in suddenly making the discovery that Mr. Johnson's health was in absolute want of some German waters—in fact, she decided that it was quite dangerous for her to spend the spring in England, with all the changes of heat and cold. The old lady was therefore soon persuaded to yield to such tender solicitude, and away the couple went, leaving Mr. James Fox in a rather awkward dilemma. What was he to do? If he wrote cool letters to Miss Nelly, she would be offended, and all his chances would be lost in the event of her inheriting Mrs. Johnson's property; on the other hand, if he played the part of a lover, he committed himself, and gave her the material for a breach-of-promise case should the good lady die when his name only figured in her will, and should he then turn his attention to Miss Laquerton. What, then, could he do?

The worthy Fox was baffled for the moment, but after deep deliberation he hit upon a great idea which his chemical studies suggested to him. Chuckling to himself, he went to a chemist's shop, purchased several drugs and mixed and remixed them till a magnificent black ink was produced, which had the grand advantage that in about ten days after being committed to paper it would fade away without leaving the slightest trace. Emboldened by the happy result of his experiments, he became at once the most tender and zealous correspondent any woman could wish for. His letters, in fact, overflowed with promises of everlasting devotion. Miss Nelly beamed with joy; for she was now convinced how true and unselfish was the attachment of her admirer.

Under such circumstances it was not surprising that the German waters specifily did Mrs. Johnson so much good that her careful nurse considered that the cure could be shortened, and accordingly the couple returned to England much earlier than had been expected.

Whether, however, the waters had really disagreed with the old lady, or something else had upset her, was never quite clear, but soon after their return to England her health and strength began seriously to fail. She complained bitterly that Miss Nelly had induced her to undertake an unnecessary and useless journey, and that ever since she had neglected her altogether. The end of it was that one day, in the height of her anger, she burnt the then existing will, and made Mr. James Fox sole heir to everything she possessed. This decision seemed to have exhausted her remaining energy, for she died not many days after.

Mr. Fox, who had been appraised of the state of affairs by his partner and friend, almost lost his senses with joy; still his excitement did not prevent him investing some money in hatbands and crape, and looking as mournful as if the sorrows of the whole world rested upon his shoulders. Miss Nelly, too, almost melted away in tears, and could only be comforted by "her Jamie," as she now called Mr. Fox. But the latter seemed to have turned quite dull with grief. He did not appear to understand her at all, and day by day as she became more demonstrative he grew less affectionate. The afternoon before the funeral Miss Nelly was extremely broken-hearted, and amid her sobs remarked how comfortable and happy she had been with her late dear friend. To her astonishment Mr. Fox attempted to comfort her by saying with cool civility, "I hope you may soon meet again with such a happy home as you have had here till now."

On hearing this Miss Nelly's tears suddenly dried up, and with eyes dilated with astonishment and anger, she cried: "It is you whom I expect to make me this happy home!"

Mr. Fox, however, simply shrugged his shoulders, saying: "I do not deny that I may have once had such ideas; but of late I have grown wiser. Everything alters in this world; why then should our opinions not do the same? That is what we call progress."

Upon this he bowed and left Miss Nelly crying and fainting in an arm-chair.

He did not hear anything of her till a few days later, when a gentleman called upon him saying that he had been intrusted with Miss Nelly Brown's affairs, and suggesting that perhaps Mr. Fox, before matters went further, would prefer making some private arrangement about his breach-of-promise of marriage with his client.

"And what proof of that promise has Miss Brown except her saying so?" asked Mr. Fox.

"Oh," answered the young man, "I have seen a box full of letters from you."

"Have you read them?" continued Mr. Fox sarcastically.

"No, yet," replied the other; "but I have seen the box."

"Well, you had better go and read them first before you take any further steps, and if you can find a single line from me to Miss Brown, I am quite willing to let her have ample damages without their being awarded by a court of law."

Their was something so diabolical about Mr. Fox that the young defender of innocence found it best to retire for the present, leaving his opponent to rub his hands triumphantly and build castles in the air about the country-seat, the horses and carriages he was going to buy in order to dazzle Miss Laquerton, whom he felt justified in seriously thinking about now.

Miss Nelly had meanwhile been informed of the conversation at Mr. Fox's office, and, with an indignant exclamation about "such incredible untruths," she went to fetch her letter-box. There, sure enough, were the letters, all in little blue packets, neatly tied up with blue and pink ribbons; but strange to say she could not see an address; and, oh, heavens! when she undid the packets they contained nothing but paper—all white paper, without a single word on it. The wily lawyer had evidently deceived her by some demoniacal trick.

The shock was so great to the poor love-sick lady that she had scarcely the courage to show herself when the will was to be read; but she rallied at last, hoping against hope that it might still be in her favor, when she could treat with scorn and contempt her faithless lover and his paltry damages.

Mr. Fox, although he considered himself already master of the house and everything in it, felt considerably excited on the morning of the day appointed for the reading of the will, and when Mr. Plumley, as chief executor, sat down and slowly got his spectacles out, his junior partner came over so faint and his heart fluttered to such an extent that he fan ied all his hopes and beautiful castles in the air were crumbling as in a dream. Why did not his old friend at once read the document? Why did he make the suspense so unbearably long? Why did he continue to stare first at the paper in his hand, then at those around him, and then once more at the paper without uttering a single word; and then at last, when he did speak why did he stammer, "I—I do not know: I see nothing—in fact, it is the same paper, but?——"

Could it be? Yes, sure enough there was the paper on which the will had been made out, but there was nothing upon it now; it was merely a blank, a white sheet!

Good heavens! With what ink did you write out that will?" burst out at last Mr. Fox.

"With what ink?" repeated the old gentleman indignantly, "with your ink. As I found the inkstand up stairs dry, and the old lady was in such a deadly hurry, I rushed down myself to get some, and seeing your little bag in the hall, I took from it the little inkstand which you always carry about."

Mr. Fox turned deadly pale, and without saying another word vanished, like the ink, before anybody had found time to ask for an explanation. When the rest of the company had composed themselves again, Mr. Plumley said:

"I know that the testatrix has destroyed all former wills, so that there is none at all in existence, and, by law, therefore the property will go to the next of kin. I know, also, that Mrs. Johnson had no relatives whatever except Miss Lizzie Roberts. She is consequently sole heiress."—*London Truth.*

Explaining Some Things.

The world learns geography and many other things by means of war. Many of the changes that have been wrought in society have been due to knowledge and prejudices acquired or removed through years of conflict. If Russia and England conclude to settle the Eastern question once for all on the boundaries of Afghanistan, we shall presently be as familiar with the little satrapies of that far distant region as we thought ourselves learned on surgical terms when a President recently lay at the point of death. For the information of all such as have a desire to post themselves in advance, it may be said that the Nizan of Hyderbad is an old lopeared despot who has seven hundred wives and who slices up a mother-in-law every time he wants to celebrate: that the Akoond of Swat died a few years ago, but that the throne is now held by the Swipes of Swat, who will rule until the young Akoond comes out of the bullrushes; that the Begum of Bopul is a fat old woman weighing about three hundred pounds, who fed her husband, the Bildum of Bopul, to a crocodile about ten years ago because he refused to split wood for breakfast, and that the Mudir of Abdurramah is the uncle of the Begum aforesaid and the twin brother of the moon. With these few leading features of the situation clearly understood, it will be an easy matter to follow the fortunes of war and diplomacy in the far East and understandingly grasp the developments from day to day.—*Chicago Herald.*

Where the Best Lobsters Are Taken.

The best lobsters in the world are taken off Monhegan in the winter. They thrive better in the deep water out to sea than on the shores of the bays where most of the Maine lobstermen set their traps. The Monhegan fisherman are getting splendid prices for their lobsters this year—$10 to $10 50 per hundred. Think of that you people who think you pay high prices for lobsters! The jobber and the retailer have to make profits on these figures. But you probably do not get a taste of the big Monhegan lobster, but eat shell-fish which are caught at Bristol or Boothbay or somewhere along there, for which $7.50 per hundred is paid. The Monhegan lobsters are shipped to New York and Boston. I saw 10,000 of them in a car in Portland Harbor the other day. The lobsters are kept alive in these great cars, tied to the docks, from the time they are taken out of the smacks till they can be shipped. A lobster car looks like a cattle car flattened out. It is a huge box sufficiently open to let the water in and keep the lobsters in. Lobsters are sociable fellows. It is sport to see them rub each other's backs and embrace each other, as if bidding their good-bys, when they are dipped out of the car and leave their brine for good. They squirm as if they had premonitions of hot water

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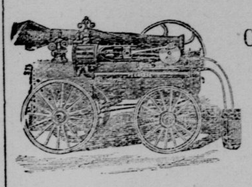

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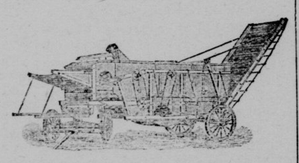

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6 50	2 38	Easton,	11 45	9 37
7 00	2 49	Chapel,	11 33	9 24
7 08	2 55	Cordova,	11 27	9 17
7 18	3 05	Queen Anne,	11 18	9 08
7 29	3 16	Ridgely,	11 06	8 58
7 39	3 26	Greensboro,	10 56	8 48
7 48	3 36	Goldsboro,	10 46	8 38
8 55	3 43	Henderson,	10 40	8 32
7 02	3 50	Marydel,	10 34	8 26
8 11	3 58	Slaughters,	10 26	8 18
8 14	4 00	Hartley,	10 24	8 16
8 24	4 09	Kenton,	10 14	8 06
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