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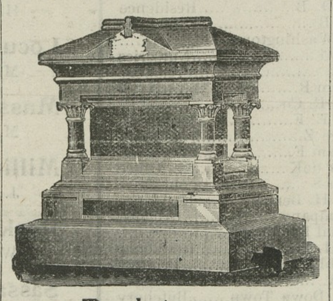
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A FEMININE WITNESS.

The woman had been summoned to testifiy in a case at court, and to use her own expression, she was "frightened half to death."

"Served you right for getting mixed up in other people's affairs," said the man to her so crossly that she determined she would not ask him a single thing about the procedure, but she forgot in a minute, and asked tremulously,

"Where does one sit?"

"Sit?" queried the man, whose thoughts had gone a-wandering; "what do you mean?"

"In the court," explained his companion. "Is the dock a great, high place, fenced around, where every one can look at one?"

"Witnesses don't sit in a dock. Indeed there won't be any need for a dock in this case, for there isn't a prisoner."

"Oh!" said the woman; then she thought for a bit. "What will they ask me?" she demanded. "Will they ask me my age, for instance?" The man said they would not, and she looked relieved. "You understand,' she said presently "I don't in the least mind telling my age. I would just as leave proclaim it from the house tops, if there were any necessity for doing so; but it wouldn't have anything to do with this case." The man said he understood. "What do they do with people who commit perjury?" asked the woman, after another moment of deep thought.

"Give them thirty years," replied her mentor, absently.

The woman looked frightened and her lips moved in silent prayer.

They neared the court house, and the woman grasped the man by the arm.

"Don't let us go in yet," she gasped, breathing hard. "I am not in the least frightened; but if we walk a block or two we can have such a pleasant chat about the topics of the day. Will the judge rap on the desk at one if she doesn't talk loud enough? Would it be perjury if I forgot and said Wednesday, for instance? Do you stand up or sit down while you are testifying? How do they swear you? You needn't go toward that court house, for I positively will not go in. I had a great deal rather be in contempt of court and be sent to the penitentiary for thirty days."

"Don't be foolish," said the man, sententiously, and led the way into the court room, paying no heed to the woman's final excited query,—

"Do you have to kiss the Bible?"

During the testimony of the other witnesses the woman trembled.

"You said witnesses sat down," she said reproachfully, when one young man stood up to give his testimony. "They'll be sorry they ever called me when I have ruined their case and covered my friends with confusion by bursting into tears on the stand, and that is what I am going to do, I know it. Oh, why was I ever born to make a spectacle of myself in this way!"

"Keep quiet," said the man in a sepulchral undertone.

"I don't see any jury," whispered the woman.

"There isn't any," whispered back the man.

"It isn't a legal trial, then," murmured the woman; "but I don't care, for there are twelve people less than there might have been here, or is it nine?"

"Silence-e-e!" said some one, and the woman's name was called.

She explained later that she will never know how she got to the dock—she persisted in calling it that to the end of the chapter—but once there, she answered the few questions put to her in a voice loud enough to be heard, only forgetting the number of her house and having to grope wildly around in her mind for it a minute or so before the questioning could proceed. She looked for the man, so that he could convey her encouragement with his eyes, as he had promised to do, but he had basely deserted her and got behind a post. The opposing attorney asked her a question, which she answered with a modicum only of intelligence, and then having done neither good nor harm to the case she was allowed to step down and out.

"How did I do?' she asked the man, smilingly, as they re-traversed the corridors. "Not so bad I fancy. I don't mind testifying in the least. I had just as leave do it for a living. It takes a bright woman to give intelligent testimony."

"Have you any idea what you said on the stand?" asked the man with the mean intention of calling her down.

"Not the slightest replied the woman airly. 'I was too excited to notice."

"Then," said the other in portentous tones, "I have the pleasure to inform you that you have perjured yourself beyond the shadow of a doubt."

"But I couldn't have done that, for I didn't take any oath."

"You did not? What do you suppose that elderly individual said to you when you went up to the 'dock' and held up you hand?"

"I am sure I don't know." said the woman, falteringly. "I thought he was telling me where to sit. I could not understand a word, and he did not have any Bible with him, did he?"

"You will be arrested before the night is over," said the man, grimly, "and get thirty years, sure.

And then he left his trembling victim to her doubts and fears, and went on his way smiling sardonically.

THE TWO SINNERS.

She was a woman, worn and thin, whom the world condemmed for a single sin. They cast her out of the king's highway, and passed her by as they went to pray. He was a man, and more to blame, but the world spared him a breath of shame. Beneath his feet he saw her lie, but he raised his head and passed her by. They were the people who went to pray at the temple of God on the holy day. They scorned the woman, forgave the man; 'twas ever thus since the world began. Time passed on, and the woman died; on a cross of shame she was crucified. The world was stern and would not yield, and they buried her in the potter's field. The man died, too, and they buried him in a casket of cloth with a silver brim, and said as they turned from the grave away, "We buried a noble man today." Two mortals knocked at heaven's gate, stood face to face to inquire their fate. He carried a pass port with an earthly sign, but she a pardon from love divine. O! ye who judge twixt virtue and vice, which, think ye, entered paradise? Not he whom the world said would win, for the woman alone was ushered in.—Taylor.

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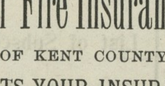
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