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# A THREE BOTTLE COMEDY

By W. E. NORRIS

"Mercy upon us! Tasted like curacao!" shrieked Mrs. Alston, starting to her feet. "Why, you raving lunatic, do you know that you have swallowed a whole bottle of Wyllie's Matchless Hair Renewer! Send for a doctor—send for a stomach pump—take mustard and hot water and then get somebody to hang you up by your heels! I don't want to be a constructive murderer, or an accessory before the fact, or whatever they call it. Be off this instant. You have no time to lose!"

Lord Arthur waited for no second bidding, but took to his heels, while Mrs. Alston dropped into her chair once more and covered her face with her hands.

"Was there ever such luck as mine?" she groaned. "Never before since the world began can any woman have met with a man capable of pouring her hair dye down his throat! I suppose if he recovers he won't dare to tell. But what is the use of that? It's simply impossible for me to face Sir Thomas with my hair all gray at the roots and rusty half an inch higher up. Oh, I must be ill and take to my bed and telegraph for another bottle at once. There's absolutely no alternative!"

Meanwhile Lord Arthur had rushed off to the stables to consult the stud groom, in whose veterinary skill he had the utmost confidence, and who, he hoped, might be able to provide him with some rough and ready remedy in the absence of a duly qualified medical man.

"Jenkinson," he gasped, "have you got such a thing as a powerful emetic that you could give me? I believe I've taken poison by mistake."

The portly little spindle shanked man whistled. "Come along with me, my lord," he answered promptly. "I'll give you a dose that I keep for the lads when I want to give 'em a lesson they won't forget. That'll do the trick for you, you may depend. It's that searching that in about five minutes from now your lordship'll be able to feel the joints in your backbone by on'y merely pressing your 'and upon your watch chain."

Lord Arthur was conducted into the saddle room, whence he presently emerged, walking unsteadily and rolling his eyes, while Mr. Jenkinson returned to the stable yard with a bland smile upon his rubicund countenance. At the same moment Sir Thomas Clutterbuck hurried toward him from the direction of the house and said:

"How are you, Jenkinson? How are you? That fool of a groom of mine has made some idiotic mistake and brought me a bottle of filthy scent, or something of that kind, instead of the red lotion that I wanted for the mare's back. Unless I can get hold of some I'm bound to gall her tomorrow. I dare say you know, Jenkinson, that there are horses whom the very best of riders can't help

galling in the absence of special precautions."

"Certainly, Sir Thomas," answered the stud groom. "We can let you have as much red lotion as you like."

"Ah! But is it the right kind? I wish you would just allow me to look at it."

A bottle was produced for Sir Thomas' inspection. He examined it, shook his head and grumbled under his breath, but said he supposed it would have to do. "How such a stupid blunder can



The grand and beautiful Bible story of Abraham intercepted on the point of slaying his cherished son has a deep significance which every mother should take to heart. Too many mothers of the present day bind their children upon the altar of neglect and misunderstanding, all unperceived that beneficent providence forbids the sacrifice.

Women who expect to be mothers do not care for their own health as they ought, and thus the health and lifelong welfare of the prospective little one is sacrificed. All women should know and use the health-supporting power of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription in every delicate condition of the organs pertaining to maternity.

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W. R. Malcolm, of Knobel, Clay County, Arkansas, writes: "Since I last wrote you we had had a baby girl born to us. My wife took your 'Favorite Prescription' all during the expectant period and until confinement, and she had no trouble to mention."

have been made is more than I can understand," he remarked. "My man swears he gave me the lotion all right, but I traveled down with a couple of ladies, and it so happened that I had to deliver a bottle to each of them from their respective maids. I wonder if I could possibly have misdealt!"

Jenkinson slapped his leg and burst into a roar of laughter. "That's what you've done, Sir Thomas, you may be sure," he chuckled. "Lord Harthor Fulton came out here not ten minutes ago in a pretty stew. Said he believed he'd swallowed poison by accident and arst me to give him an emetic—which I done. Now, I'd lay odds one o' them ladies has been offering him a pull at your red lotion, sir, thinking 'twas her own private supply o' cherry brandy. Dear, dear! What a most extraordinary start!"

Sir Thomas was too angry to see the joke. "Map alive!" he exclaimed. "It isn't possible to swallow red lotion! Why, half a monthful of it would set him on fire! Where is he? What have you done with him?"

Lord Arthur staggered into the yard to answer the question in person. He seated himself upon an inverted bucket, dropped his head on his hands and moaned out feebly, "Jenkinson, you have more than half killed me!"

"And served you jolly right, too," cried the irate baronet. "Teach you to go taking surreptitious nips out of la-



"Send for a stomach pump!" dies' flasks at odd hours! Be thankful that you are not quite killed. Meanwhile I'll trouble you for the remainder of my red lotion!"

"Your what?" asked the other, lifting a pallid face. "It wasn't red lotion. It was hair—at least I don't know what it was. Anyhow I drained it to the dregs."

"The devil you did!" ejaculated Sir Thomas aghast. "This only shows what the young men of the present day have brought themselves to by their perpetual swilling. Drained a bottle of red lotion to the dregs and never imagined that there was anything amiss until it was all down! Why, what an inside you must have!"

"I have no inside," Lord Arthur replied in a lamentable voice. "Jenkinson has deprived me of every vestige of it. I'm not at all sure that I shouldn't have done better to take my chance with the red lotion—if it was red lotion."

"Oh, you're all right, my lord," said Jenkinson reassuringly. "A bit squeamish you must expect to feel just at first, but you'll have a fine appetite for dinner, you'll find."

Sir Thomas was perplexed, and began to ask questions, but he obtained no intelligible answers, the young man feeling that, whatever the truth might be, his first duty was to shield Mrs. Alston. After a time therefore they went their several ways, Sir Thomas remarking by way of moral: "Well, this will be a lesson to me not to meddle with women's perfumery again, and I hope it will be a lesson to you to be a little more careful about your liquor in future."

Lord Arthur made no audible response; but, like Galilei, he reserved the last word for himself. "I believe it was curacao all the same," he muttered.

Sir Thomas Clutterbuck ascended pensively to his bedroom to get ready for dinner, for there were circumstances connected with this imbroglio which seemed to him to demand elucidation. Could it be that Mrs. Alston was in the habit of carrying cherry brandy about with her when she visited her friends? If so—but he was confident that it was not so.

"Oh, no! It must be t'other woman," he assured himself, "and the scent—which ought to be taken to her, by the way—is hers." But the bottle which stood upon Sir Thomas' dressing table and upon which he had as yet bestowed only a hasty glance did not contain scent. He picked it up now, and the label upon its surface told him in unequivocal terms what it did contain. This discovery gave him what Lord Arthur would have called "a nasty jar." He whistled and walked away toward the fire, shaking his head ruefully and murmuring: "I couldn't have believed it of her! I've often enough heard people say that the color was unnatural, but I set that down to envy and jealousy. Ah, well! There's an end of my little romance, and it's lucky for me that I've found her out in time. Because, mind you," added Sir Thomas, addressing space impressively, "a woman who will deceive you in one way will deceive you in another."

suffered him to tell her how greatly he admired her wonderful hair the desire to pay her out grew strong within him. "She deserves to be publicly exposed," he said to himself, "but I suppose it would be almost too cruel to take the bottle down stairs and hand it to her before them all."

Then on a sudden a brilliant idea occurred to him. "By Jove, I will!" he exclaimed aloud. "The others won't like to make any remark, even if they understand, but she'll understand fast enough, and I flatter myself that she won't enjoy her dinner this evening."

Mrs. Alston did not at all expect to enjoy her dinner, inasmuch as she had made up her mind to partake of that meal, or some poor substitute for it, in her own room. Already she had telegraphed to London for a further supply of the incomparable dye, and had sent a message to Mrs. Longworth to the effect that an excruciating attack of neuralgia would prevent her from seeing anybody that night or hunting on the morrow, but what went near to making her ill in good earnest was a dreadful piece of news which reached her from Lord Arthur Fulton in answer to inquiries which common humanity had prompted her to make as to his condition.

(To be Continued.)

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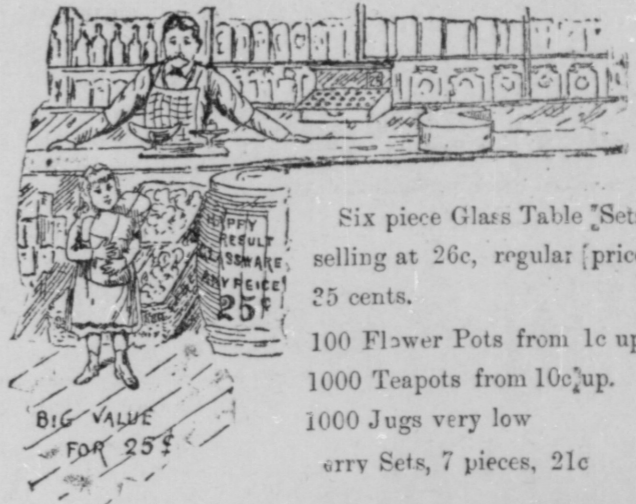
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