

THE EVENING NEWS.

Tuesday, July 16, 1912.

POOR JAMES WYMPER.

(Continued.)

"Not jolly then, or salt or sugar, that you should melt in a shower," she replied.

The last quoted opinion of the great Augustus was that it was sure to rain, and so this observation of Miss Bessy was not so inappropriate as it may at first appear. But why should she have blushed so? And if she had really intended to tell him he was not jolly, why did she not go on and say so? Besides, he had not confounded Mr. Bailey because that authority had predicted rain, and Miss Bessy knew it. She flattered herself that she had got very clever out of a difficulty, and the blush changed to a smile; but she had only made bad worse. To tell a man that he will not suffer under the rain on a stated occasion, naturally implies that he may be subjected to a wetting on such occasion; and—

"O then I'm to go!" said poor James.

This was a poser. He had not been invited, and there was a reason why he could not be. He looked up from his work with such a happy smile on his great broad face that Bessy's heart smote her.

"Well, you see, the gentlemen are mostly friends of Mr. Bailey. We invite them, you know, but—won't you be kind to tell me the truth, James Wympere?"

"Does truth hurt?"

"Sometimes. The fact is, that it is customary at water parties for the gentlemen to provide the beer and wine, and that costs money, you know."

"O, so I cannot go because I have not got money to pay my share, eh?"

"You would not like to place yourself under an obligation to Mr. Bailey and his friends, I suppose?" she said with a smile.

"I wish you would not curl your lips when you speak, Miss Jervoise. That does hurt," he said, with a low voice and a bent head.

"I beg your pardon!"

"O, never mind. But suppose," he continued gaily, as though a bright thought had struck him, "I were to help to row one of the boats, and arrange the dinner and that, wouldn't they let me come?"

"I never saw such a man!" Bessy exclaimed, losing all patience. "Have you no single spark of self-respect—no dignity? O, how can you be so mean-spirited!"

"Work is as good as money any day," he replied, looking her full in the face.

"Yes, if you go as a servant."

"You said just now that every one had to make himself useful at a picnic."

"It's no use arguing with you; you will not or cannot understand."

"You don't want me to go."

"On the contrary, I should like you to join us if—"

"If I had the money?"

"If you could go on an equality with the rest."

"Well, I've got five pounds. Is that enough?"

"Five times enough. But where on earth did you get it?"

"Sam sent it in that letter."

"And who is Sam, pray?"

"My chum in Chicago."

"Don't you think it would be more proper to give the money to your cousin, who has been so liberal to you?"

"O, I'll pay her some day. This runs first-rate now," he said, collecting his tools. "He let me go to the picnic. Come, now, you've got to get an invitation, and I'll make your shirt."

"And if you'll believe me, this man set to work with the machine he had just set in order, and ran four breadths of the blue silk before he was as wax and as straight as a rule, without missing a stitch."

"As Bessy made a point of his being invited, and Mr. Augustus Bailey was her humble servant, and both to be something more, no difficulty arose on this point; but on another there was trouble. Some Cockneys had misbehaved themselves on the meadows where it was fixed that our party should dine, and the proprietor, hardening his heart against all pleaders, had refused his permission. The outing was nearly given up, when it was discovered that a mile or two further on there was an estate to be bordered on the river, and the great Augustus made it all right with the agent."

The next day poor James Wympere disappeared before breakfast, and did not return till night.

Where had he been? To London. What for? Why, to buy some new clothes, to be sure. Did they think he was going to let that skunk of a term I am sorry to say, he permitted himself to designate the elegant and highly-scented Augustus Bailey—did they think he was going to let that skunk insult him again about his coat?

"I hope you did not think I had run away again, cousin Margaret," he added with some anxiety.

There was nothing to find fault with in his personal appearance on the morning of the picnic—dark green and black heather mixture suit, tie to match, black felt hat, and a little mallow's feather stuck in the band.

"Dear me," exclaimed Mrs. Jervoise, "he looks quite handsome!"

"Who is that talking to Mrs. Bryce?" asked the inevitable curate. "What a magnificent head he has!"

"Wh—ah!" shouted the great Augustus.

"Magnificent to a phenologist, I think," the curate explained.

"Ha, ha, he has cured the skunk!"

"Look here, you fellow here's a joke! Mr. Day says he is a phenologist, and finds Wympere's head magnificent!" Ha, ha! "Why, don't you know?" he added in a whisper, "that the fellow's half an idiot?"

During the embarkation and row up the river poor James Wympere's conduct was remarkable. Instead of doing everything for everybody, as usual, he stood apart, and ordered people about royally. "I'm quite pleased with you to-day," whispered Bessy as he handed her out of the boat on the bank of the estate that was to be.

"Now, I say, you—what's your name, you Wympere, come and take the hamper out!" said the great Augustus. "Take them out, you—well, you—Bailey!" he shouted back. "You haven't been rowing I have?" and he strutted on to join a party of ladies, including Bessy. Bessy turned on hearing the loud talking, and somehow got detached from her friends.

"Why are you pleased with me to-day, Miss Jervoise?" he asked, as they sauntered on together side by side through the shrubbery.

"Would you very much like to know?"

"I shouldn't have asked unless."

"Guess, then."

"Because I've been making myself disagreeable?"

"I don't think you have been making yourself disagreeable."

"Well, then, because I haven't been making myself useful?"

"That's not the way to put it, but you are turning."

"Because I've got new clothes?"

"Nonsense! You know what I mean, or you wouldn't have answered as you did at first. Good gracious! I hope it is not going to rain!"

"Oh, no, no," he persisted.

"Oh, don't say that."

"All right."

To be continued.

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Leave going West. 1.00 p.m. 4.00 a.m. 7.35 a.m. 10.15 a.m. 1.00 p.m. 4.00 a.m. 7.35 a.m. 10.15 a.m. 1.00 p.m.

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