

BOWSER PACKS TRUNK

Wife Proposes to Visit Her Mother, Who Is Victim of Accident.

SAMUEL HAS HIS OWN WAY.

Headless of Mrs. Bowser's Protests, He Finishes Self Imposed Task, Forgetting Nothing—Cat Is on Philosopher's Game.

By M. QUAD.
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MR. BOWSER, you will have to come home at once. I have a telegram from your mother saying that she has run a fork through her foot and wants me to come up there at once. I want to get away on the 5 o'clock train, and I shall take my trunk along." Such was the message Mr. Bowser received over the telephone at mid-afternoon, and he waited only to reply: "What in thunder was she tramping around on forks in her bare feet for?" Mrs. Bowser had not been feeling well for a week, and the news upset her. He got home to find her lying down as she waited.

"This is a pretty how-de-do, I must say," he blurted out almost as he got inside the door. "But it can't be helped. What makes it worse is that this is cook's day out. She went just before the telegram came." "Hang the cook! What's she got to do with it?" "She could do my packing." "Not on your life! I am right here to do it myself. I blame the old lady

for walking around on forks when she could have just as well walked on

graphs you that she has stuck a fork into her foot and to come. Second, she telegraphs that it is all a mistake and you needn't come. Doesn't she know whether she runs a fork into her foot or not?"

"She ought to." "Was it some one else's foot? Was it a fork or a crowbar or what? I am hurried home to pack your trunk. I do pack it. Now it proves to be labor thrown away. By John, I'll talk to that woman if I ever see her again!" "She will probably write particulars. As the girl is out and I'm not feeling well, couldn't you go to a restaurant for your dinner?"

"Certainly! But you just hear what I say about that fork business. Suppose she had telegraphed that a brick house had fallen on her and then two hours later wired that it was all a mistake? Don't people know when brick houses fall on them? Don't they know when they run forks into their feet?"

Overhauled Mr. B.'s Work.

As soon as Mr. Bowser was out of the house Mrs. Bowser began unpacking the trunk. He had topped off with two hats, and both were crushed as flat as pancakes.

Her bearskin furs came next. Two of his nightshirts were a close third. Then was revealed her toothbrush and his razor and mug.

Then a pair of her old shoes that had been sitting in the closet for six months. Then one of her stockings and one of his socks rolled lovingly together.

Then a pair of his discarded slippers and a fur trimmed skirt. Then one of his day shirts and a half used cake of soap.

Then a calico apron which she generally wore on sweeping days. Then a dump of stuff consisting of hairpins, a tapers, a piece of chalk, a cookbook, an almost toothless back comb and a pair of his soiled cuffs. These were dumped in to fill a certain cavity.

Then came a strata of socks and stockings and neckties and woolen gloves, with an abandoned corset for a sort of keynote.

At the bottom of the trunk were two ragged waists, a pair of Mr. Bowser's trousers, five of his collars, one odd slipper, two ostrich plumes, some artificial flowers and a yard of old lace. Mrs. Bowser had the things all out of the trunk and on the floor when he returned from his dinner, and as he sat down he said:

"I think I deserve a little bit of credit, Mrs. Bowser. There isn't one husband in a thousand that can pack his wife's trunk."

"I know it," she replied. "And the few that can want all day to do it in."

"And I was just thirty-seven minutes by the clock packing a trunk that could have gone around the world."

"I know." "And nothing forgotten or out of place."

"Yes, you deserve credit. I can't imagine how you could have done it"

nothing of the kind. I have come home for my shoes and run a pitchfork through my foot and gives you a shock, and if you go to fooling with the packing you won't get away in a week. You are ready to faint away now. I wonder if it was a three tined pitchfork?"

"How can I tell?" "Probably was and is sure to result in tetanus. Only thing on earth that could lock her jaws. I know what you want in the trunk, and you lie right where you are."

"But, Mr. Bowser—" "There are no buts to it. I pack the trunk or I telegraph that you are too ill to come, and your mother must whisper her last words into a phonograph. You'll probably be up there a week, and I'll put in the duds accordingly."

Mrs. Bowser realized, but she was helpless. She turned her face to the wall, and Mr. Bowser went ahead. She heard him pulling out bureau drawers and opening boxes and taking garments off the hooks, and as he worked he hummed the air of "The Old Oaken Bucket" to himself to show that he was enjoying the occasion. Two or three times she asked him if he was putting in this or that, and his reply was:

"Now, don't you worry. Everything will be put in in the best shape. You may be thankful that you've got such a husband as I am."

The trunk was finally filled, and the lid was shut down, and Mr. Bowser dumped on it until it would close. He was warned not to break the hinges, but chuckled and said:

"The hinges are all right, and I'll put the key in your purse. I was packing trunks before you were born. I will now go out and get a carriage, and we will drive to the depot. As soon as you get up there you'd better telegraph me what kind of a fork it was. If it was a pitchfork then she must have been loading hay. If she's conscious you can give her my love."

Mr. Bowser was just going through the gate when a telegraph boy handed him a telegram which read:

"You needn't come. All a mistake." "And now what do you make of this?" he asked as he showed it to Mrs. Bowser.

"Why—why, it's rather funny." "By the seven miles, but I should say it was! First, your mother tele-

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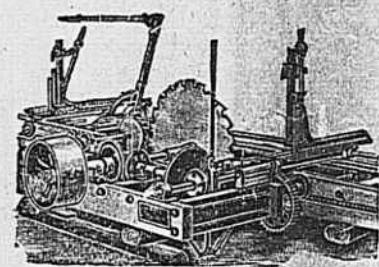
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Prince Bismarck once told a story of the battlefield of Koenigsgratz. The old emperor, then king of Prussia, had exposed himself and his staff to the enemy's fire in a very reckless fashion and would not hear of retreating to a safe distance. At last Prince Bismarck rode up to him, saying: "As a responsible minister I must insist upon your majesty's retreat to a safe distance. If your majesty were to be killed the victory would be of no use to us." The king saw the force of this and slowly retreated, but in his zeal returned again and again to the front. "When I noticed it," Prince Bismarck went on, "I only rose in my saddle and looked at him. He understood it perfectly and called out rather angrily, 'Yes, I am coming.' But we did not get on fast enough, and at last I rode close up to the king, took my foot out of the right stirrup and secretly gave his horse an energetic kick. Such a thing had never before happened to the fat mare, but the move was successful, for she shot off in a fine canter."

Tricks of Short Sight.

Not only the inanimate but the animate world presents itself in strange forms to the myopic. Humanity, for instance, is often revealed in somewhat inhuman guise. Thus, so far as ocular demonstration goes, the world to the shortsighted is peopled by men and women as faceless, sometimes even as headless, as the horseman of legendary fame. Indoors myopic persons get quite accustomed to talking with persons who have neither eyes nor nose. Out of doors the phenomenon is more striking because oftener repeated. At quite a short distance the face melts into the atmosphere and becomes either a cloud or, like H. G. Wells' invisible man, a nothingness. "I see the hat and the figure, sometimes the beard. I see the walking stick. If the hand is ungloved this stick is waving miraculously a little way from the sleeve edge, for the hand, like the face, has vanished."—Strand Magazine.

Charming Away Tigers.

No woodcutter will go about his task in the Indian forests unless he is accompanied by a fakir, who is supposed to exercise power over tigers and wild animals generally. Before work is commenced the fakir assembles all the members of his party in a clearance at the edge of the forest and erects a number of huts, in which he places images of certain deities. After offerings have been presented to the images the particular forest is declared to be free of tigers, and the woodcutters in virtue of the presents they have made to the deities are supposed to be under their special protection. If after all these precautions a tiger seizes one of the party the fakir speedily takes his departure without waiting to offer superfluous explanations.—Calcutta Statesman

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