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THE WRONG PILLAR-BOX.

Mrs. Twillett was originally Miss Eleanor Fussell, with whom it was the destiny or Mr. Bygrave to fall in love. Though he was far from handsome, Eleanor Fussell gradually felt a tender regard for him; and being aware that he had, as has been said, a competency, she allowed that tender regard to wax stronger, until she many a time caught herself sighing and thinking, 'Oh, I wish he would propose!'

Well, he did propose; and yet she became Mrs. Twillett.

Now, it chanced upon a day, or rather night, that Mr. and Mrs. Fussell fell a talking, as anxious parents will do, about the prospect of their children, and, especially, the lovely Eleanor.

'Nelly's rather hard to please, I fear,' said Mr. Fussell, with the sigh of a professional man having limited means and a large family, but with the chuckle also of an indulgent father proud of his daughter's personal attractions.

'Not so hard as you think, ye hap,' rejoined Mrs. Fussell, significantly.

'What d'ye mean?' asked Mr. Fussell, petulantly.

'Nelly's a dear, good girl, without any nonsense,' said the mother, sentimentally.

'What's that to do with it?' observed the father, angrily.

'A great deal, my dear,' responded the mother, patting Nelly. 'Nelly has admitted to me that she very much prefers Bygrave. And I must tell you, when he was down here he was hanging about Nelly in the most absurd manner, and making her all sorts of presents.'

'He must be brought to book,' said Mr. Fussell, with determination. 'I shall have to go to town in a few days, and I shall call upon him at his chambers. I shall give him every opportunity of speaking out like a man, and if he fights shy I'll speak to him. I can't have my Nelly trifled with.'

'Take care you don't spoil matters,' observed Mrs. Fussell, warningly. 'You men are so clumsy; my opinion is that Mr. Bygrave is very timid and diffident about his personal appearance, though I did tell him, so far as pretty plain hints can be called telling, that he had nothing to fear on that score. Depend upon it, he will propose in due time, if you keep your awkward fingers out of the pie.'

'If he doesn't, I'll know the reason why,' observed Mr. Fussell in conclusion.

And he did propose. In fact, he had already proposed at the very time when he formed the topic of conversation between the father and mother of his beloved and loving Eleanor. And the time was April 1, 18—.

Nevertheless, within twelve months of that proposal, though there was no quarrel and no change in Bygrave's circumstances, Eleanor Fussell became the wife of James Twillett, a handsome man enough, but, in other respects, no more to be compared with John Bygrave than a Satyr with Hyperion. Above all, Twillett hadn't a competency; he was a young professional man, with fair prospects, certainly with but little or nothing beyond the proceeds of his profession.

And why was it that Nelly never told even her mother of the proposal made to her by Bygrave? Until she became Mrs. Twillett, she never mentioned that proposal either to her mother or to any other living soul.

Mr. Fussell was as good as his word. When he paid his due visit to town, he called at Bygrave's chambers. The black door was inhospitably shut, and on it was pasted a piece of paper, bearing upon it some written characters. Mr. Fussell, who was near-sighted, adjusted his glasses, went close up to the door, read the handwriting upon the wall, was for the moment struck dumb, and, so soon as he recovered the use of his tongue, made use of severe expressions. What he read was: 'Gone to Jericho; return in about eighteen months.' That was all, except the chronic notice in white letters upon the black door, to the effect that 'messages and parcels' were to be left at the head porter's lodge. To that lodge Mr. Fussell at once repaired.

'Mr. Bygrave appears to have gone abroad?' said he, interrogatively, to the porter.

'Gone to Jericho, sir,' answered the porter pleasantly; 'for a little outing, sir; comin' home by way of Afriky in about eighteen months. Letters not to be forwarded. Any message, sir?'

'Dear me!' replied Mr. Fussell, but not to the question: 'it must have been very sudden!'

'Mr. Bygrave's a rather suddenish gentleman, sir,' assented the porter with a smile. 'I've known him to come home late from the Derby on a Wednesday night, and be off early next morning, just leavin' a note for his landress to say, that, if anybody calls, he's gone to Both'em for a week or two.'

'Beth'em,' muttered Mr. Fussell; 'and a very proper place for him. But, he continued, in a louder tone, 'I suppose you don't know why he should have gone to Jericho just now?'

'No, sir, I don't know exactly,' replied

the good-humored porter. 'But I can guess why he's gone to Jericho.'

Mr. Fussell said nothing, but looked expectant.

'You see, sir,' continued the porter, more confidentially, 'Mr. Bygrave's most intimate friend is a painter, a gentleman that paints Scripture subjects, and that's engaged at present, as I heard, on a picture of the man that fell among thieves; and Mr. Bygrave, I take it, has gone to pay his friend a visit.'

Mr. Fussell thanked the communicative porter, and departed without leaving any message. For the only message he could think of was, 'Tell him he was a villain; and the porter was hardly the proper person to deliver it.'

When Mr. Fussell reached his home in the country town where he practiced his profession, he sought the earliest opportunity of being closeted with his wife. In the conference that ensued both were utterly puzzled. How Bygrave should have behaved as he did was incomprehensible. And yet, while appearing to have fled from and jilted their daughter, the young man had really proposed.

Nobody, however, would have guessed that he had, to judge from Nelly's behavior. A free as pile as a fly, nights devoid of rest, and pillows wet with tears followed immediately upon the announcement made to her that Bygrave had gone away; gone, without a word or letter; gone, after the significant speeches he had made, secretly in her own ear, and openly before her family; gone, not to return for eighteen months at the least; gone, leaving a request behind that letters should not be forwarded, and not leaving any address to which they could be forwarded. Then, apparently, came the stage of womanly pride and just resentment. Her heart was seared indelibly, but her face recovered its bloom and its brightness. And Twillett became the accepted lover. Twelve months rolled away, and she became Mrs. Twillett. The happy honeymoon was over; she returned to her native town to a snug little house on its outskirts; and in the very first week of her return, as she sat in her boudoir waiting for her husband to come home,

she opened a letter which she had received from her father. The envelope was a large, blue one, and bore an address which accounts for its having been sent to her father's—Miss Eleanor Fussell. She smiled as she broke open the cover, but the smile was succeeded by a frown and a start when she perceived inside the cover a second letter. This second letter was blood red, and, as she looked at the handwriting, she trembled exceedingly, and a snatched cry escaped her white lips.

It may be remembered that on the night of a certain 1st of April, 18—, Mr. and Mrs. Fussell had a conversation about the propriety of bringing Mr. Bygrave to propose; whereas Mr. Bygrave, it was remarked at the time, had already proposed. Well, at dusk on that same 1st of April, a raw country lad might have been observed in Fleet street with a letter in his hand, and staring and gaping inquiringly about him. At last a gleam of intelligence and satisfaction lit up his face, and he moved hastily toward an iron pillar box, which stood by the road-side, and near which some mischievous young Arabs of the London streets were playing.

'Want a letter box? Here you are, my boy; shove it in at that hole at the top,' said one of them, in the most friendly and insinuating accents, to the country lad.

'O' know,' replied the country lad with a look of superior knowledge and experience, as he carefully dropped the letter in at the suggested hole, and walked off with an air of satisfaction.

'Oh! you April fool!' shouted the Arabs after him; but he either didn't know what they meant, or believe in its being impossible that any boy who ever would infringe the law which forbids the making of April fools after twelve o'clock at noon. At any rate, he went his way regardless of scolds.

'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' screamed the treacherously friendly Arabs, laughing as if her very sides would burst; 'his bin and gone and put his love letter in the dust-bin; that he have!'

As the country lad passed one of the arch-ways that lead from Fleet street to the Temple, he was brought to a sudden standstill by a stentorian shout.

'Thomas!' cried a voice that made the country lad jump.

Here, of course, Master Bygrave, answered Thomas, with a tug at his front hair, and a broad grin at the gentleman who had called to him.

'So you've posted my letter?' said the gentleman.

'Ees, Master Bygrave, o've done it,' answered Thomas with unconscious equivocation.

'Bravo! Thomas,' rejoined the gentleman kindly; 'you've done your first errand in London splendidly. I watched you from here almost as far as the pillar box; but I couldn't see quite all the way. You didn't have any difficulty, I suppose?'

'Noa, I fund 't pillar, and I popped un into 't slit-a-top.'

'That's all right; and I am glad to see

you took no notice of those young ragamuffins who seemed to be laughing at you. Now you can go; good-night.'

And away went Thomas with an expression of unbounded self-content.

Thomas was the son, or rather one of the sons, of a poor widow who had lately lost her husband by an accident while Bygrave was on his visit to the Fussell, and it was only one of those many generous actions, which, partly reported of him, and partly known of her own knowledge, had tended to endear him to Eleanor Fussell, when he undertook to find schooling and occupation and a livelihood for Thomas in London. But how came Thomas to be entrusted with the posting of Bygrave's letter? Why, thus: The letter was addressed after a fashion which makes most bachelors living in chambers do their posting for the day, in order to avoid prying eyes, significant looks, well meant but offensive allusions, and little tattle and so. Bygrave had listened to put it himself as he walked down to his club; but, having encountered Thomas in the very nick of time, and Thomas not having yet eaten of the tree of knowledge so far as to be able to decipher handwriting or even print, he seized the occasion of giving Thomas a lesson in the art of performing a master's business. He had directed Thomas to pop the letter into the first iron pillar box he came to; he had watched Thomas going the right course; he had seen Thomas halt close to the very spot where the nearest pillar box stood; and he had observed with satisfaction that Thomas promptly returned, and disregarded the many chances that offered of a game of hide-and-seek with a round dozen of street boys. It was as satisfied about the safe lodgment of the letter as if he had dropped it into the box with his own hands, and he never gave it a second thought.

And with a ten days' delay to the great astonishment of Thomas, started off on a sudden to Jericho.

Let us return to Mrs. Twillett. She had just strength enough left to tear open the blood red letter and read as follows:

APRIL 1, 18—.

My Dear Mr. Bygrave,

When I received your letter, I was not for the confession I am going to make, and the bold request I am about to urge, I ought not and I should not dare to use them. My confusion is that I love you, for love is a word that, in my vocabulary includes everything that longer words are generally used to express; and my bold request is that you will be my wife. Many a time, during the happy days I spent at your side, I have been on the point of pleading my cause to you by word of mouth, and asking for your sentence upon me; but I could not bear to hear a possible refusal from your sweet lips. I determined to write; for I know how tender your heart is, and by writing I should spare you the pain that I know you would feel were you to witness the effect it would have upon me if you were to tell me that my case is hopeless. And if it be, I will not put you to the disagreeable necessity of telling me so in writing or otherwise. Let this be our compact; if I have hope, send me one short note, and I will fly to you at once; if I have none, do not write at all. I will wait a week; and if by the 8th of this month of April, I receive no dear, encouraging, hope-giving, beautifully little note, I shall know that my fate is sealed, and my future misery is assured. I shall go abroad, to Jericho; there I have a friend, a painter of some subjects. He will sympathize with me. He is engaged in printing a picture of a man who fell among thieves. He will, figuratively, pour wine and oil into my wounds. He will probably avail himself of my expression for the countenance of the wounded man himself. If I were not aware how excellent your nature is, how lightly you esteem what those who have haven't any of it call dress, in comparison with moral worth, and how great a sin you consider idleness, I would not, as it is in my favor, that, though I am not rich exactly, yet I have a considerable independent income. However, knowing as I do your noble opinion as to the dignity of labor, it might tell against me rather than for me if I were to suggest that my income of £1,500 a year would enable us to scrape along (if I may use the expression) with the necessity of doing anything in order otherwise, for a livelihood; but I may surely say that such a position, being regarded by the world as an advantage, would give you a certain influence and certain means likely to be of assistance to you in your efforts to obey the general instincts I have always greatly admired in you. External graces to recommend me, I am fully conscious I have none; my looking glass tells me so with cruel plainness, and I fear that I am equally vainly off for any kind of personal merits, unless, indeed, there be some small merit in having recognized and devoted myself to the best, the loveliest, the sweetest of her sex. O! Eleanor, have pity upon me, and make me happy for ever. Each hour will be a hundred years as I wait for the fatal 8th. I shall have my luggage all ready; and if

by the morning of the 8th I receive no letter from you, I shall accept my destiny in silent despair, and start forth with for Jericho. I shall return, if indeed I do return, by way of Africa, where, if I do not court, I shall certainly not shun the deadly weapon of the savage, and the deadliest fever of his climate; and should we meet in future days, pray behave to me as if this long letter had never been written, as if there had never been anything but friendship between us. Believe me to be, my dearest Eleanor (for I must write it again), your most passionately attached and devoted admirer, lover and—in my case—friend.

JOHN BYGRAVE.

Mrs. Twillett was quite overcome. She kissed the blood-red letter over and over again; and she whimpered, as the tears trickled unheeded down her cheeks:

'His face, the darling, what did I care for his face! But I'd no notion he had so m—m—much as fit—fit—fit ten hundred a year of his own. But what does it all mean?'

And she turned for explanation to the other letter, which ran as follows:

SHADY FARM, May 20, 18—.

Mr. Plowman presents his compliments to Miss Fussell. Though I haven't the pleasure of knowing you, miss, I thought it my duty to forward the letter, and I hope it will be in time. The way it came to Shady Farm is singular. Excuse my mentioning top-dressing connection with a lady, but having had a load of the same down lately from London, and being at work putting it on the four-acre field, we found the letter quite accidentally right among the dressing. Pray, don't be frightened at the color; it's only Cooley's fluid. We thought, considering what the letter had one through, it might be the better for a good soaking and disinfecting. Hoping you'll find it not such the worst, I remain yours, respectfully,

THOMAS PLOWMAN.

'There must have been some dreadful mistake somewhere,' murmured Mrs. Twillett, and as the strange fate of poor Bygrave's proposal presented itself before her, her soft became

her experienced mind, correctly surmising Kyster's, appeared untrammelled and brought her to. So that Mrs. Twillett was quite calm, and had removed all traces of letters, by the time Mr. Twillett came home.

While Bygrave was absent the elation of Thomas had been proceeding, and had soon arrived at such a pitch that he knew the difference between the two kinds of pillar boxes—one for letters and one called a 'street orderly bin' for all manner of dirt and refuse in Fleet street; and many bitter tears did Thomas consequently weep during his kind master's absence. No sooner did Bygrave reappear than Thomas, now almost rid of his rus is dialect, reposed an audience, which was grateful.

'Well, Thomas,' said Bygrave, kindly 'what is it?'

'Please, sir,' replied Thomas, as pale as a ghost and shivering with emotion, 'I put that letter in the dust-bin.'

'What letter and what dust-bin?' asked Bygrave with a stare of blank amazement.

'The letter you gave me to post just afore you went away, sir,' blabbered Thomas.

'It?' cried Bygrave, fiercely, as his memory returned, and his face almost blackened by sun and bad weather, grew stern and rigid; 'what did you say you did with it?'

'Put it in the dust-bin, sir,' repeated Thomas, in a low but distinct voice.

'The boy's mad!' muttered Bygrave. 'Why,' he continued in a low voice, 'I saw you post it yourself; at least I saw you go almost up to the pillar box and—'

'The wrong pillar box, sir, please,' interrupted Thomas with a moan.

'Good gracious!' cried Bygrave, starting up from his seat and clenching his fist; 'you don't mean to say you put it in—'

'Yes, sir, yes,' said Thomas, with fair full eagerness, and approaching as if to meet rather than avoid the impending blow—in the pillar box where the rubbish is put.'

'You've spoiled my whole life, Thomas,' said Bygrave hoarsely. 'What d'ye think you deserve?'

'Killin', sir, killin', responded Thomas, with a sob, but with an honest, fearless look into his master's face; 'that's what I deserve.'

'Then consider yourself killed, my boy,' rejoined Bygrave, with a sad smile unclenching his fist, and laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. 'It was more my fault than yours. It never occurred to me that anybody could mistake one for the other; but I ought to have recollected that you were quite a stranger, and might never have seen what the "street orderly bins" were used for. And when I come to think of it, they are rather like the letter boxes. It's all right. Thomas, you may go.'

And, sighing heavily, Bygrave sat down and wept. Don't think it unanalogous or unphilosophical of him. He had, at any rate, just behaved as philosophi-

cally toward Thomas as the great Sir Isaac toward Diamond.

But it must be acknowledged that the wrong pillar box has established curious relations between three people, who are liable to meet pretty frequently in society.—Chambers Journal.

Too Poor to Take a Paper.

Moore, of the Rural New Yorker, was sitting in his office one afternoon some years ago, when a farmer friend came in and said:

'Mr. Moore, I like your paper, but times are so hard I cannot pay for it. Is that so, friend Sons? I'm very sorry to hear that you are so poor; if you are so hard ran I will give you my paper.'

'Oh, no, I cannot take it as a gift. Well, then, let's see how we can fix it. You raise chickens, I believe?'

'Yes, a few, but they don't bring any thing hardly.'

'Don't they? Neither does my paper cost anything hardly. Now, I have a proposition to make to you. I will continue your paper, and when you go home you may select from your lot one chicken and call her mine. Take good care of her and bring me the proceeds, whether in eggs or chickens, and we call it square.'

'All right, brother Moore,' and the fellow chuckled at what he thought a capital bargain. He kept the contract strictly, and at the end of the year he found that he had paid four prices for his paper. He often tells the joke himself, and he never had the face to say he was too poor to take a paper since that day.

'I begin to understand your language better,' said my French friend, Mr. Arcourt, to me; but your verbs trouble me still; you mix them up so with your propositions.'

'I am sorry you find them so trouble some,' was all I could say.

'I saw your friend, Mrs. James, just now,' he continued; 'she says she intends to break down housekeeping. Am I right there?'

'Break up housekeeping, she must have said.'

'O, yes, I remember; break up housekeeping.'

'Why does she do that? I asked.

'Because her health is so broken into.'

'Broken down, you should say.'

'Broken down—oh! yes. And, indeed, since the small pox has broken up in our city—'

'Broken out—'

'She thinks she will leave it for a few weeks.'

'Will she leave her house alone?'

'No; she is afraid it will be broken—broken—how do I say that?'

'Broken into.'

'Certainly; that is what I meant to say.'

'Is her son to be married soon?'

'No, the engagement is broken—broken—'

'Broken off!'

'Yes; broken off.'

'She is very sorry about it. Her son only broke the news down to her last week. Am I right. I am so anxious to speak English well.'

'He merely broke the news; no proposition this time.'

'It is hard to understand. That young man, her son, is a fine fellow—a breaker I think?'

'A breaker, and a very fine fellow. Good day! So much for the verb "to break".'

New Probabilities.

When you see a man going home at two o'clock in the morning and know his wife is waiting for him, it is likely to be stormy.

When a man receives a bill for goods his wife has bought unknown to him, look out for thunder and lightning.

When a man goes home and finds no supper ready, the fire out, and his wife visiting the saloons with the rest of the boys, it is likely to be cloudy.

When a man promises to take his wife to a party, and changes his mind after she is dressed, you may expect a shower.

When a man saves his cigar money to buy his wife a new bonnet and the children new shoes, it indicates a spell of sunshine.

When a man dies and leaves a nice young widow with plenty of money and you see her walking out with the executor on Sunday afternoon, a change is imminent.

HOW TO GET RID OF RATS AND MICE.

We get rid of rats by putting potash in their holes and runs. The poor wretches get it on their feet and over their fur, then they lick it, and do not like the taste of it; it burns them somewhat, and the more they see of it the less they like it; so they clear out almost as soon as the application is made.

To get rid of mice we use tartar-emic mingled with any favorite food; they take it, take sick and take their leave.

Items.

About women—Men. Engaged for every set—A hon. Children fed on New York milk require no chalk mixture.

The Reformed Synod has decided not to unite with the Presbyterian church.

The art of Book keeping taught in one short and easy lesson—never land them.

It is true that one swallow doesn't make a summer, but it comes summers near it.

A young man's affections are not always wrong, but they are generally misplaced.

'Is it those dead letters that smell so so bad,' says my wife to me as we passed the Post office.

A baker has invented a new kind of yeast it makes bread so light that a pound of it weighs only four ounces.

'Sally,' said a lover to his intended, 'give us a kiss, will you?' 'No, I shan't said Sally; 'help yourself'

A man in San Francisco has boldly started the theory that it hurts a China man to be stoned to death.

A Delaware obituary; 'His hat wasn't always cocked over the left ear, but he didn't owe a butcher in town.'

'He has left a void that cannot be easily filled, as the Bank director touchingly remarked of the absconding cashier.

A Yankee wanted the Bridgo of Sighs pointed out to him; and then offered to bet America had several bridges twice the size.

An old lady, hearing somebody say 'The nails are very irregular,' 'It was just so in my young days, no trusting any of 'em.'

A Kentucky gentleman didn't get mad until he had been called a 'liar' eighty one times. The monotony of the thing 'riled' him.

The last little girl who has 'roped' her way to glory is a daughter of Dennis Mahoney, of Boston, who jumped the times and then died.

The Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli's constituents have presented him with the exact sum which he spent in securing his election, £1, 516 15s.

A Western member of Congress who interpreted M. C. to mean Mora Curoney, was made to understand that it meant Mighty Corrupt.

One pint of whisky cost a jury in Sullivan Ill., about \$300 the other day eleven jurors having been fined by a feroocious judge \$25 each for drinking in a jury room.

Last year farmers of Guthrie county, Iowa, burned their corn because they couldn't sell it. Now they travel miles to purchase it, and pay half a dollar a bushel for it to feed their horses.

There is not a man, woman or child in this house who has arrived at the age of fifty years but has felt the truth thundering through their minds for centuries.

Women have many advantages over men: one of them is, that his will has no operation till he is dead, whereas her's generally takes place in her lifetime.

There are two reasons why more people don't mind their own business. One is that they haven't any business, and the other is that they haven't any mind.

Eli Love of Wayne County, Ohio, climbed a tree to shake out a coon. The dogs heard something drop and went for it but it was not the coon. It was Eli.

'You have played the deuce with my heart,' said a gentleman to a lady, who was his partner in a social game of whist at an evening party. 'Well,' replied the lady with an arch smile, 'it was because you played the knave.'

The first photographer has opened his saloon in Truckee, Nevada, and has been shot at by a minor who insisted on having his picture taken by lamp light as he was going away early in the morning.

An old clergyman spying a boy creeping through the fence exclaimed, 'What! crawling through the fence! Pigs do that.' 'Yes, rotortol the boy, and old hogs go along the street.'

A young man who has recently taken a wife, says he did not find it half so hard to get married as he did to get the furniture; and when it came to getting the bread and butter he had to fall back upon the old folks.

A formal fashionable visitor thus addressing a little girl; 'How are you, my dear?' 'Very well I thank you,' she replied. The visitor then added, 'Now my dear, you should ask me how I am.' The child simply and honestly replied, 'I don't want to know.'