

THE TIME LIMIT.

It was August and intensely hot, and, though there was positively nobody in town, London was positively crowded. In a particular West-End terrace, however, life was anything but strenuous. A yawning policeman promenaded slowly past the odd numbers, while a young girl, exquisitely dressed, was walking briskly past the even in the opposite direction. Except for these two human beings the terrace was deserted. The girl hesitated before the last house and stared a little wistfully at the hall door. Then she swung round the corner and hesitated again. It was all so quiet, so ridiculously like the country. A man had been painting the gate; the brushes and paint pot were still there. Evidently he had gone for refreshment. The gate was open. The girl thought hard for half a minute or so, and took something that closely resembled an Easter egg out of her pocket. She entered the garden and deposited it beneath a rhododendron bush. Glancing at the house, she saw that the French window leading into what looked like a library was open. Here again there was evidence of quite recently interrupted work. Somebody had been cleaning windows, and, as likely as not, the girl reasoned, had joined the house painter in the quest of mutual solace. The girl walked quietly into the house and rang the bell. Then she sat down in the most comfortable chair in the room. A minute or two later a puzzled butler stared protest, and admiration at her from the doorway.

"Tell Mr. Davidson that I shall see him here, in this room, it will be cooler. Yes, now! Lady Laura Bridgevale, and do be quick."

The butler bowed and withdrew.

In a few minutes Mr. Davidson shuffled furtively into the library. The girl smiled at him.

"It's horribly hot," she said, gently; "I thought it would be cooler in the library. Do sit down."

"Bridgevale—Lady Laura Bridgevale," he muttered.

The brazen cover of "Debrett" confronted them both from the near corner of a bookcase.

"I don't seem to remember," he continued, and he moved a pace toward that corner.

"No, no, it's no use," the girl interrupted. "I'm not Lady Laura Bridgevale. I just said the first name that came into my head."

Puffy and startled, the man turned on her. "You mean," he stammered, "false pretences—in the City—I never heard—"

The girl laughed out loud. She had a nice laugh. "There isn't much time," she said, looking straight into his eyes.

"What do you mean?" At the moment he wished that his son, Montmorency, were at home. He hated talking to these insolent women of fashion, who mocked him even while they clutched for his money. "What do you mean?" he repeated, avoiding her eyes.

"I want a hundred pounds," said the girl, brightly.

For an instant the dull, heavy eyebrows were raised. Then they relaxed into their old furtiveness.

"Yes, I want it at once," continued the girl. "They said you were prompt and liberal."

"Who said?" gasped Mr. Davidson.

"The daily papers, of course. Why, it's everywhere, and they say you won't take security."

"Security? What? Why, you must be mad! In the City—you come to me talking like that—calling yourself Lady Laura Bridgevale, and talking about a hundred to my face. Do you think I find a hundred pounds in my garden?" He broke off abruptly. His angry composure fell placidly beneath the scrutiny of her stare. Again the desire for Montmorency came to him. The oily, varnished tongue of his son had always smoothed such predicaments as the present. She might be laughing at him; she might be a duchess for all he knew. He dared not express the insolence of his soul.

"I want a hundred pounds," continued the girl, "and yes—ten shillings for a hansom."

"I can't do it," said the man of business, his teeth closing in angry finality.

"You've got to do it, Mr. Davidson," said the girl.

"Do you mean just on your note of hand?"

"Yes, I do; but there's a time limit—for you."

Something like a gloomy grin passed over the money lender's face. "You mean a promissory note—three months?"

"I mean ten minutes, and three have gone already."

This time he thought she really was mad, and he jerked his body forward like an animal in pain.

For a moment Mr. Davidson's dull eyes wandered to the clock on the mantelpiece.

"I think you'd better just rest, madam," he said feebly, eyeing the door sideways as he spoke.

"There isn't much time for rest," said the girl.

Fear came to him. From the yellow, heavy eyelids drops of perspiration started almost like tears. The forehead contracted, he looked years older.

The girl played with the tassel on her red parasol. "It's like this, Mr. Davidson," she began kindly. "Do you know what a time fuse is?"

"In the City"—he began and then he collapsed.

"I don't mean in the City," said

the girl. "I mean among the anarchists."

The word shook him. The girl knew that he would not try to escape. She held him easily in his chair with her eyes.

"You see, Mr. Davidson," she continued airily, "there's been quite a lot of bomb throwing lately, in Paris, in Vienna—they watch them there. It's much easier in London, Mr. Davidson. As she spoke she rose from her chair and glanced out of the French window. "It's in the garden, Mr. Davidson, and it's a ten-minute fuse!"

"My God!" groaned Mr. Davidson as he staggered to his feet.

"It's no use calling the police," said the girl; "that won't help you. I'm not an anarchist, you know; I'm just a girl who wants a hundred pounds and ten shillings, and I do want it very badly, Mr. Davidson."

"Do you mean that there is a bomb in my garden? Do you mean, while you sit twirling your finny fall-las, that me and mine may be blown to eternity?" The terrible fear in his yellow face made him for the moment something other than come to his visitor.

For the instant she relapsed into seriousness.

"You see, Mr. Davidson, it's as quiet as the country here. London's like a village out of the season. I was just walking behind him; he was horrid and shaggy. I think he was a little mad, Mr. Davidson. He threw the thing in just like this," she added, waving her arm, "and then he said, 'Usurer, ten minutes for your prayers. I don't think he was a nice man, Mr. Davidson. There was no policeman about, and so I came in to tell you myself. But I do so want that hundred pounds—and ten shillings for the hansom. No, it's no good making a noise, and shouting for the servants or the police—they can't help you; there's nobody in London who can help you. Mr. Davidson, but me. You see, while they're arresting me, you'll be blown into heaven."

"I'll do it," said the money lender, and the girl could not face the animal terror of his eyes.

"Here, take it!" In a moment he had thrust ten ten-pound notes into her hands.

"Wait a moment," said the girl; "we have three more minutes. I can't be found with the bomb, Mr. Davidson, or they'll arrest me as an anarchist. Can you catch Mr. Davidson?"

"You don't mean that you are going to throw the accursed thing at me?"

"The accursed thing is as harmless as a chocolate box until the time limit," said the girl. "It's like this," she continued, taking a little parcel from the pocket of her skirt. "You see this little bonbon box, Mr. Davidson; imagine the fuse, the ten-minute fuse, Mr. Davidson, placed here at the side. For ten minutes that little bomb is as harmless as an inkstand. Throw the fuse into water one second before the time limit, and you are safe. There's a carafe at your elbow; look, you have just a clear minute; put those notes into this little Easter egg—you see I mean fair play—throw it to me out of the window, and you will receive, in perfect safety, the most deadly investment of modern life. Ah, I forgot the half-sovereign, Mr. Davidson."

The money lender had already adjusted the notes, and began to fumble savagely in his pocket for this purchase of life.

The girl walked airily out of the French window.

"Now, then, Mr. Davidson, I'm ready!" she cried, extending her dainty gloved hands.

Something between a prayer and a curse died hard between Mr. Davidson's throat and lips. He threw the little bundle out of the window, and the girl caught it easily. She stepped lightly towards the rhododendron bush and stooped down.

"Catch, Mr. Davidson!"

The money lender extended his arms. It struck him somewhere between the throat and the diaphragm, and he staggered back, clutching blindly at the table to save himself. He rushed to the carafe and poured its contents over the harmless looking little object. Then he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

Nothing happened. Gingerly Mr. Davidson removed what seemed to be the lid. He found a small piece of paper on which was scrawled an "I O U" for a hundred pounds and ten shillings, with a time limit of three months noted in brackets.

When Mr. Davidson, not without a hint of fear in his voice, repeats this story to his cronies he adds what appears to him most extraordinary about the whole affair is that the money was actually repaid anonymously within the given time.—J. A. T. Lloyd, in London Sketch.

The "Physiotype."

This is an English invention for making pictures by impression of leaves, ferns, lace, feathers and various other objects. It depends upon the chemical action of a fine powder. The object of which a representation is to be made is placed upon white paper and pressed, either by the hand or with other means. When the object is removed no impression is visible on the paper but upon sprinkling the powder over the paper the picture at once appears, sharply defined, and remains permanent. Sections of wood and the designs on coins and medals can thus be represented, and the prints can be transferred to lithographic stone, zinc or aluminum, thus producing records from which any number of copies may be taken.—Exchange.

DAY SIX MONTHS LONG.

Greenland's icy Mountains Grandest Scenery in the World.

Greenland's west coast is considered to have the grandest scenery of any coast in the world by Roger Pollock, who writes of a journey thither as follows: "The sunny arctic day, which lasts for months, a sky all flaming glory, the fretted spires of the Alps flanked with stupendous cliffs and based on the restless levels of the sea, cities of crowded bergs compound of dazzling light and radiant color—such scenery as that blots out one's former memories."

Our first port of call was Jakobshavn, at the head of Disco strait, biggest of the northern villages, a metropolis of nine white people and 400 natives. Beside a pocket harbor, perched on round shoulders of the naked granite, are the buildings, all tarred black of the Royal Trade company. For a background to the dismal scene rise higher rocks, littered with garbage and turf huts, the homes of the natives. At heart the place is gay, for our soldiers went ashore every night to dance with the Eskimo girls, while the officers of the ship and colony swapped dinner parties, breakfasts and luncheons all through a nine days' festival.

"Men and women alike," the writer continues, "were linguists, well read, accomplished, a little too polite for comfort, living a metropolitan life on one batch of letters a year in an arctic outpost. Expecting the pathos of banishment, I found the gayety in perfect content. The Dances of all the settlements were alike in social charm, gentle and polished—arrant gossips, too; and the indoor life had little to remind one of the outdoor wilderness. The Inuit servants were the furry breeches, boots to the hip, and curious topknot of their national dress—one had to fall promiscuously in love with all of them."

"Even the Danish men wore native dress, but there was one important distinction—they washed! The food, apart from Danish groceries, was seal meat, fish, reindeer, venison, shellfish, ptarmigan, sea birds and their eggs, which, as served in Greenland, are always pronounced in flavor."

RAT AND CAT IN FIERCE FIGHT.

Policeman Who Went to Rescue Pussy Badly Bitten by Rodent.

Persons in the neighborhood of Ross street and Wythe avenue, Williamsburg, recently witnessed a fierce fight between a cat and a rat, and Policeman Nicholas Benson, of the Clymer street station, was severely bitten in the leg before he succeeded in killing the rodent.

The rat ran out of the wagonway of a sulphur mill on Wallabout Creek. It ran along the gutter, turning from Kent avenue into Ross street, followed by a crowd of boys, who threw stones at it.

At Wythe avenue and Ross street is a grocery store. Adjoining this is a stable. The stable doors were open and the rat ran in. The grocer's big gray cat was in the stable and with one bound had the rat by the back of the neck.

Within the next five minutes the cat had got all it had bargained for. The rat freed itself from the cat's grip and fastened its teeth in the feline's throat. It was evident to a large number of spectators who witnessed the fight that the cat was no match for the rodent.

After a five minutes' combat the cat, with the rat's teeth in its throat, fell backward into the gutter.

Policeman Benson was one of the spectators. He saw that the cat was no match for the rat, and with a big shovel he struck at the rodent, which turned its attention to Benson.

With one bound the rat sprang at the policeman and fastened its teeth in his right leg. Benson tried to shake off the animal, but it held a firm grip, and as the pain he was suffering was acute Benson drew his revolver and pointing it at the rat's head, killed it with one bullet.

Benson's wounds were cauterized by a doctor. The half dead cat was carried back to the stable.

Wondrous Ways of Ants.

Lieut.-Col. Sykes saw the Poonan ants carrying out grain to dry in the sun. Dr. Linnaeus in Texas found ants who planted a certain seed-bearing grass, reaped it, and carried the grain into their cells, where they stripped it of chaff and packed it away. The paper relating this was read by Darwin before the Linnaean Society. Another observer has told us of ants which grow mushrooms.

The foraging ants of Brazil and Western Equatorial Africa are terrible creatures. Elephants and gorillas fly before them; the python takes care not to indulge in a meal till he has satisfied himself that there are none of them about. They have a "leisure class," much larger creatures, who accompany their march, "like subaltern officers in a marching regiment," they are not fighters, however. One curious conjecture as to their function has been made. They are indigestible, and birds spare the whole army lest they should get hold of one of these tough morsels. This it must be allowed, looks a little too strange.

Slaves the ants certainly have, but they do not make slave raids; the larvae of the inferior race are carried off and hatched out. The crowning marvel, however, is that the British slave-owning ant, and he alone, makes his slaves fight for him.—London Spectator.

WHEN POISONED BY IVY.

Prompt Attention Will Save Much Intense Suffering.

The leaves of poison ivy often change to beautiful tones of yellow and red in the fall and are sources of great temptation to any one who is out hunting autumn decoration.

Poison ivy has three leaflets, and Virginia creeper has five. The former has white berries, the latter purple. All the drugs in the world are of no use in preventing a bad case of poisoning, unless one begins to do something as soon as the telltale itching begins. When the pustules break open, one is almost sure to be in for three days or a week of suffering. It is well to have a little bottle of extract of grindella in the house all the time. Rub it on the affected parts averted, and be sure to lose no time every five minutes until the trouble is in beginning.

Pidgin English.

Pidgin (or pigin) English is an artificial dialect employed in Hongkong and the treaty ports of China by foreigners of all nationalities who do not speak Chinese in their dealings with native servants, merchants, coolies, etc. Its base is corrupted English, with a mixture of Chinese, Portuguese and Malay words, arranged to Chinese idiom. The word "pidgin" is itself a Chinese corruption of the English word "business."

The Judge's Fault.

There is a story told of an English judge, newly appointed, who remonstrated with counsel as to the way he was arguing his case. "My lord," said the advocate in question, "you argued such a case in a similar way when you were at the bar." "Yes, I admit it," quietly replied the judge, "but that was the fault of the judge who allowed it."

Oklahoma's Home-Owners.

One thing Oklahoma may boast of is her homes. In but one State in the Union—North Dakota—do so large a percent of the people own their homes as in Oklahoma. The census of 1900 shows that 71.8 per cent. of its people own their homes. This is a better showing than was made by any of the adjoining States.—Kansas City Journal.

REFLECTIONS

There is nothing in a name. No river thief has ever stolen a river. Critics are misanthropic persons who have a penchant for throwing stones. If a man could get credit for his good intentions money would be no object. A man never gets full until he is too far gone to get home sober. After a woman gets stout she's as suspicious of a pair of scales as one past 40 is of the arithmetic table.

Blondin's Trip Across Niagara. M. Blondin for the first time crossed the Niagara river, just below the falls, on a tight rope, June 30, 1859.

Damages By Insects.

It is estimated that the damage done by 12 insects alone in the United States will amount to \$380,000,000 this year. The cinch bug leads off with \$100,000,000 to its credit. The others which make up the list are grasshopper, Hessian fly, potato bug, grain weevil, San Jose scale, apple worm, army worm, cabbage worm, boll weevil, boll worm and cotton worm.

Foreign Flags in U. S. Ports.

Foreign vessels entering U. S. ports are obliged to display only the flag of the country to which they belong. It is customary, however, for steamers to carry the U. S. flag at the foremast, when entering U. S. ports, but this is merely a matter of international courtesy and is not compulsory.

Italian Laborers.

Laborers in Italy get 20 cents a day in the country and 40 cents in the cities. In the rice fields of Ravenna the female workers get only 12 cents a day. They are bowed nearly double and are emaciated, while their children are anaemic and undersized.

For a Smokeless Fire.

If a sheet of paper be laid at the bottom of a grate so as to prevent air from coming up between the bars, and a fire built on this, and lighted from the top, such a fire will be practically smokeless.

The Housefly.

An ordinary housefly will lay 120 eggs during its existence, and 90 per cent. of them will be hatched out. Twelve or thirteen generations of flies are produced in an ordinary summer.

The Gold in the Vatican.

The gold contained in the medals, vessels, chains and other objects preserved in the vatican would make more gold than the whole of the present European circulation.

Italian Corn in France.

Italian small corn no longer circulates in France, having all been returned to Italy some years back, since when it has been demonetized in France.

It is not always the man of dash who accomplishes the greatest deeds. The man who tells nothing likes to look into the affairs of others.

Whole Whale Weighs 100 Tons. The weight of a full-grown whale is about 100 tons; that is, about as much as 80 elephants.

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