

THE TABLES TURNED

By F. C. STEIGER

Silas Venable, an old dorky who had taken his name from the former swarms of his family, was as good a man as ever lived. He had gravitated north late in life and was entirely uneducated. In his southern home he was known to be above reproach; in his northern home, when accused, he must take his chances like other suspects. A diamond had been lost which Silas was accused of stealing. Indeed, the owner declared that the stone was lying in a room late which Silas had gone to replace some rugs he had been cleaning. The room was missed as soon as he came out of the room, and he was searched. It was not found, and the owner believed that Silas had swallowed it.

Casey, the owner of the missing property, determined to frighten the old man into confessing the theft. Getting a few friends together in his house, he appointed one to play the part of judge, another to defend the prisoner, while he set himself the part of prosecuting attorney. Silas had never been charged with crime in his life and, having never been in a courtroom, knew no more of the organization of a court than a three-year-old child.

"Silas Venable," said the judge solemnly. "You are accused of stealing a valuable diamond. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

Silas rolled his eyes about wildly and said:

"Fo' de Lawd, judge. I don't know nothin' about any diamond."

"My client pleads not guilty," said Jones, the prisoner's counsel.

"Your honor," said Casey, "I propose to prove on behalf of the state that the prisoner stole the property and, being suspected and accused before he could get rid of it, swallowed it. I intend to look into the stomach of the accused and find out whether the lost gem is there."

"How do you propose to look into my stomach?" asked Silas, much frightened. "Yo' hain't wise to put a pipe down my throat wid a candle in it, air yit?"

"Will your honor explain the X ray process to the prisoner?" asked the prosecutor.

"Does it hurt, Judge?" asked Silas.

"Not at all. You won't feel it a bit."

"All right. Go ahead," said the prisoner confidently.

His ready assent somewhat surprised the court, who had supposed that there was no doubt but that he had done the theft. But Casey, taking the dorky's confidence for bluff, proceeded with his plan. Producing a pair of binoculars with a scale for distance attached, he affected to adjust the latter carefully, then, putting them to his eyes, pretended to look into the prisoner's stomach. Silas did not seem at all troubled.

"What do you see, Mr. Casey?" asked the judge solemnly, while some of those present put their handkerchiefs to their faces to conceal their laughter.

"I see first small bits of chicken."

The expression on Silas' face changed at once. He looked badly frightened.

"I thought we would get at the truth," remarked the judge, diving into a law book before him to preserve his gravity.

"Fo' de Lawd, judge," pleaded Silas, "I didn't steal dat chicken. I bought it."

"Bought chicken at 30 cents a pound?" exclaimed Casey.

"No, sah. Job Wilson he got a chicken roost, and he sold me dat chicken 'cause I give him some table garbage I was takin' from a gentleman's house for de chickens. He didn't charge me nothin' fo' it."

"What else do you see, Mr. Casey?" asked the judge.

"I see a little black spot about the size of my diamond."

"Do you see the diamond itself?"

Casey considered that to say he saw the diamond would not be true or fair, so he claimed only that he saw a dark spot that might be a diamond.

"Fo' de Lawd, judge," said the prisoner, "dat spot ain't no diamond. I done didn't steal it."

There was so much honesty in the old negro's face that his accusers gave up this "third degree" game, and when his counsel demanded his discharge Casey assented.

"Would one of de gentlemen object to lookin' into Mr. Casey's stomach?" asked Silas.

Casey looked a bit annoyed. His friends, anticipating more fun, demanded that the negro's request be granted. Jones seized the binoculars and brought them to bear on the new subject.

"What do you expect to find in Mr. Jones' stomach, Silas?" he asked.

"Oysters."

"Yes, I see oysters. What else?"

"Lobster said."

"Why, certainly. I cannot only see the meat, but there's a claw in his stomach."

"When and where," asked the judge of Silas, "did Mr. Casey eat the oysters and the lobster?"

"Well, Judge," Silas replied, "I was gwine past a chophouse yesterday, and I saw de gentleman havin' a supper with yo' wife."

There was consternation in the court, and at the same time Mrs. Casey, who had been listening at a keyhole, came in to say that she had found the missing diamond in her jewel box.

The court adjourned amid much embarrassment and some suppressed snickering.

An Incongruity

By JOHN GALLAGHER, JR.

After my admission to the bar a friend of Mr. Larkins, of the law firm of Larkins, Larrabee & Lincoln, gave me a letter to him recommending me for a salaried position in his office. I was advised to see Mr. Larkins at his house, where I would receive more friendly attention than in his office. I called about 4 o'clock, expecting to find him returned from his office, but since he had been detained there later than usual I concluded to wait for him. I was shown into a large drawing room as dimly lighted as those of most city dwellings. Indeed, since it was winter and the days were short there was hardly any light at all because of heavy window drapery.

A door opened into a conservatory, and while sitting in profound silence I heard a succession of oaths. There were two incongruities connected with the matter. In the first place, the profanity came from out a profusion of flowers and, in the second, was spoken in a woman's musical voice. Furthermore, they did not express irritation, the lady who spoke them seeming to be simply rolling them out just to hear them. In other words, as they were uttered there was no meaning to them.

They soon stopped and were followed by a few notes of song, in the same sweet voice as the oaths. Then a young girl came out of the conservatory, passed through the drawing room, unconscious of my presence, and, swearing like a trooper as she went, passed out into the hall and upstairs. I got a view of her as she passed a gas jet that had just been lighted, and her face was as innocent of guile as her tongue was defiled.

"I was especially pleased that she did not see me, for she would doubtless have been deeply mortified. Mr. Larkins came in presently, and I presented my note of introduction, which was instrumental in securing for me the place I coveted. I soon learned that he had a daughter who was considered a beautiful girl, and I inferred that she was the one I had heard uttering profanity. I was curious about her, for I could not understand how a refined woman could have a fancy for listening to oaths uttered by herself.

I had not been long in the employ of Larkins, Larrabee & Lincoln when Mr. Larkins invited me to dine at his house. I accepted gladly and on the evening appointed appeared at the house in evening dress and wearing my best expression. It seemed singular that I should be desirous of impressing a girl who could swear "like an army in flannels," but such was the case. When introduced to her I found it difficult to repress a smile, thinking as I did how shocked she would be did she know that I had heard her at her worst.

I can't say that Miss Laura Larkins was a handsome young lady, but she gave one the impression of being very refined, modest, pure. Indeed, she was the last person I would have supposed would indulge in the unladylike habit of swearing. To tell the truth, there was something so novel in such mark-peddling in hearing a lovely girl uttering with a sweet voice uttering profanity that I wished she would do it again. But instead her words were well chosen and pure English, there was not a bit of slang, and everything she said was refined.

This introduction at the house of my employer resulted in a love affair between me and Miss Larkins. After a while I was made a junior member of the law firm where I was employed, and, being approved by Mr. Larkins as a son-in-law, I was accepted and duly engaged. While I had been fascinated by the incongruity of oaths spoken in a melodious voice, I was at times troubled by this peculiarity. Might not a girl who would give vent to such expletives have something bad about her inner self which some day would crop out to shock me? I wished to tell her that I had heard her swear and hear her explanation, but could not bring myself to do so. So I went on, subject to occasional fits of terror lest I would marry one whose devilish nature might burst forth at any moment.

My fiancée was at the time I met her a college girl. One day I took up in her house the book of a play in which she had acted as an undergraduate. One part, that of a man, was marked throughout. While reading it I came upon the very oaths I had heard her utter. Here was an explanation. She had performed this part.

A moment later when she entered the room I fired them at her.

"Oh," she said, "you have been reading the part I played at college. We girls were expected to leave those swear words out. But we never did rehearse."

"Why not?"

"Why does any girl fancy what she is supposed to let alone?"

Then I told her of the first time I saw her—how while I was shocked I was pleased. She said that it was that same shock that desire to break in upon forbidden things, that pleased girls. She also confessed that several of the girls who took part in the play, unrepresed by authority, were in the habit of rolling out the oaths I had heard her use just for the pleasure of doing something they had no business to do. As for herself, she played the part of the man who did the swearing.

I asked her to do it just once, more and after that never to do it again. She declined to oblige me.

A NEW REMEDY

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN

When I graduated from the medical college I secured the position of house surgeon at a hospital. I had not been there long when a man was brought in who had fallen from a scaffold. He was dying and I told those who brought him there that nothing could be done for him. His brother was not satisfied and telephoned for a physician, Dr. Blackwell, who stood very high in the profession, to come right over. He went to work on the patient as soon as he arrived and succeeded in prolonging the man's life perhaps an hour. It struck me that he would have better let the man die at once instead of prolonging the agony.

Those connected with the dead man complained of me to the doctor, and before he departed he said to me privately:

"Young man, never give up a patient until he is dead. When you have tried every remedy applicable to the case try something that is not applicable—hot water, cold water, mustard, alcohol, anything—to persuade him to believe that you have not given up hope. Such a course may carry him over the bar and bring him into a snug harbor."

I remembered Dr. Blackwell's advice. We practiced in the same town and occasionally ran across each other, though he had a practice much superior to mine. However, I met a young lady whom I wished to make my wife. Miss Helen Stanford, and although I was not very well started in my profession, I was so deeply in love that I was not inclined to wait. The lady's father was of a different opinion. He positively forbade the match—at least, till I could count on a practice of \$5,000 a year.

I was in despair, for the best I could scrape together was \$2,000 a year, and I felt sure that ten years would be required to reach the goal, if I ever reached it. Helen loved me, but was fearful that if she married me she would be a drag on me instead of a helpmeet. So she decided with her father.

One evening, about a year after I had been turned down, there came a sharp ring at my telephone, and on taking up the receiver I heard Helen's voice.

"Oh, Paul, do come at once. Father has got a shabone in his throat and is struggling desperately to get it out."

"I'll go right around," I said, and, dropping the receiver, ran out to my buggy that was standing at the door and drove rapidly to her house.

On reaching there I found Mr. Stanford frightened out of his wits. He was literally choking to death. I directed the family to call for another doctor—Blackwell, if they could get him—and then I went to work with my larynx. I could think of to get out the shabone. Nowadays they resort to tracheotomy—that is, cutting a hole in the windpipe through which the patient may breathe—but if they practice that then I was not up to it. I thrust hooked instruments down the throat but somehow I couldn't get a purchase on the bone. Under my operations my patient was every moment getting more frightened and finally fell into such a condition that I could not get at his throat.

Meanwhile messengers were running hither and thither to get another doctor, with no luck in finding one. Then the advice Blackwell had given me about never giving up hope with a patient till he was dead occurred to me, and, since I could not think of another direct remedy in the case of Mr. Stanford, I decided to apply an indirect remedy.

"Have you any fat ham in the house?" I asked of those standing about.

"No."

"Grease of any kind?"

"We have some bacon."

"Bring some at once."

The bacon was brought, and, cutting it into small bits, I forced the patient's jaws apart and dropped them one by one down into the throat.

Now, whether any of the pieces went down into the stomach or not, whether the fat bacon made the patient sick, I don't know to this day, but he threw up his dinner, and with it up came the shabone.

Before he could even speak Mr. Stanford grasped me by the hand, and when he did speak his first words were:

"You've saved my life."

At the moment there was a ring at the doorbell, and in came Dr. Blackwell. My patient pointed to me and repeated with difficulty that I had saved him. The doctor looked at the bacon fat I was wiping off my fingers and was about to ask what treatment I had used when I tipped him the wink.

"I used an emetic, doctor," I said, "expanding the throat."

"Very right," said the doctor. "Just the thing."

Dr. Blackwell and I went out together, and when we were alone he looked at me for an explanation. I reminded him of the advice he had given me at the hospital and how I had profited by it. He was much amused, and my act quite won him to me. Soon afterward he took me into his practice with him, and Mr. Stanford ceased his opposition to me from the time I relieved him of a shabone in the throat by a dose of raw bacon.

I married Helen Stanford, and we have been very happy together.

Wife No. 2

By M. QUAD

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"No, I haven't heard about Joe Taylor's new getting mixed in the business very much," said Uncle Jesse, who always as some one in the crowd at the party put the question, "but I've heard sudden news that that day—yes, a good deal better. Is it that any one we all know is dead? No, but perhaps it was better for him if he was dead. I don't want to hear you in suspense, and I will therefore say that George Green got married today for the second time."

"I hain't looking for anybody to be shocked dead at the news. It has just set me to thinking and aroused a heap of recollections. You all know that I lost my wife three years ago, and after a year I married again, and am now living with No. 2. I reckon it's also pretty well known that No. 2 bosses the roost."

"There was folks in this village, gentlemen, who said that I'd give myself to death over my loss, and there were others who said I'd be sleeping around after No. 2 within a year. As for me, I felt that I was wanting away and was powerfully surprised one day to find myself sitting heartily at a boiled dinner. From that time I began to pick up, but for months afterward I had no more thoughts of marrying again than Lemuel Goodheart has of putting his feet ag'in a hot stove. I reckoned it was that the man who lost such an angel of a wife as I had deserved to be shot for thinking of marrying ag'in."

"Just when the men hit me that I'd better look around a little for another woman I can't say. I think it was after I'd cooked my own meals, made my own bed, sewed on my own buttons and washed my own shirts for seven or eight months. Then the feeling stole over me that there was room in the house for another. It sorter shocked me at first, but I'm saying that it's a feeling you can't get used to in a day or two. As soon as I began to wonder if I really ought to marry ag'in I found myself advancing a case reason why I should."

"Well, it hain't no secret that I looked around and found the Widow Glass. She might have been looking around at the same time, but I'm not going to say that such is the case. At first it was a question with me whether a widower could love for the second time. Within a week after I had hit the widow's trail that question was settled in the affirmative. I found myself a heap more in love than on the first occasion. All of you was kind enough to say that I made a damned fool of myself, and, though I couldn't see it then, I'm admitting now 't I do."

"Gentlemen, I was two long months hesitating over making the widow to be mine, and yet the rest of you was saying that she'd jump at the chance. Maybe you was right. I know this when I finally managed to get up the courage I hadn't hardly got my mouth open before she says yes."

"Now comes the real part. I'd been boss of the house, same as all of you are boss of yours. Want it natural for me to keep right on bossing? Had the thought of surrendering the reins of government occurred to me? Is a man and a husband to be treated like a child or a slave? At the first go-off her bossing was a novelty, and I rather liked it and encouraged it. I was still in love, you see. After about a month the novelty wore off, and I began to assert myself. I took the bossing business into my own hands. What followed? Why, that wife got right-up-on-her hind legs and made the air blue for forty rods around. She got out ten words to my one. When I took her by the ear to sit her down and hush her up she lit into my hair and pulled it out by handfuls."

"Gentlemen, who bosses the roost? Mrs. Shortt?"

"Who handles the cash? Mrs. Shortt?"

"Who tells me when I can go and when I shall come? Mrs. Shortt?"

"Who gives me liberty to draw my breath? Mrs. Shortt?"

"I'm only telling you what you all know and what is the gossip of the town. She made up her mind when she became No. 2 that she'd be the boss, and she's carried it out. That's the way with all No. 2s. No. 1 tucks his head down and lets you do the bossing and thinks it's all right, but No. 2 is no such chicken. She intended to get the whip hand when she married you, and she's going to keep it or raise such a row that you'll wish you was in your grave."

"Understand, gentlemen, that I'm saying nothing ag'in Mrs. Shortt. She's a nice girl. O Lord, but each pickled peaches as she does put up! And apple sass—it makes you grin from your neck to your heels! Just one of the nicest women in the country, and I hope that she'll outlive me by twenty years, but I have had to use her as an illustration. She married me to be boss, and she is boss, same as all the other No. 2s. I hain't exactly saying that the man who loses No. 1 shouldn't look for a No. 2, but I'm saying that if he does he ought to know what's coming to him and what he'll be sure to get. I've fit ag'in it and fit it, but it's no go. Tonight she sends me down here after a gallon of lard and says I can stay just forty minutes. Then forty is so mighty nigh up that I've got to get a nump on me and run all the way home, and even then Mrs. Shortt may be standing there with a club in her hand when I jump through the gate."

THE GREAT LIME MACKINAC

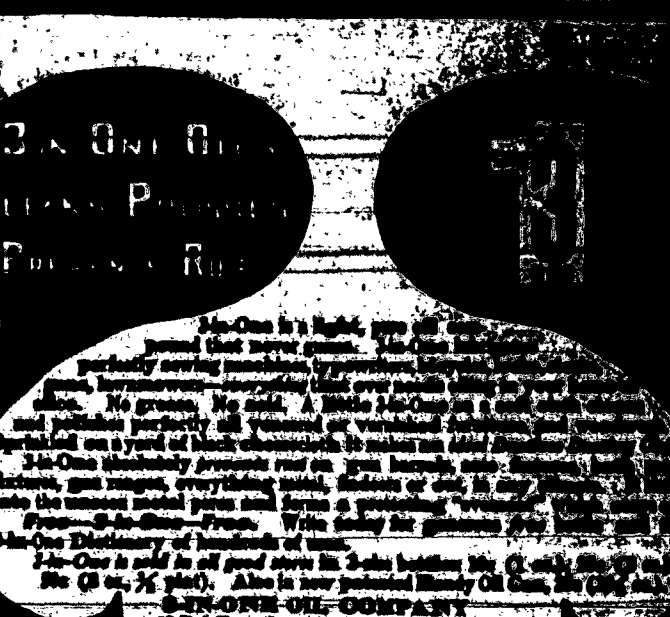


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ED. PINAUD'S LILAC

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