

SCRAPING AN ACQUAINTANCE

A MAN named George Dintley, a milkman, was charged before the Lord Mayor with attempting to drown himself. A policeman deposed to catching him in the act of springing off the parapet of London Bridge, and that it was with great difficulty he could prevent him from putting his wicked and rash design into execution.

It appeared from the statement of the defendant, who was a huge, stout man, with a most woeful visage, that he had wandered in the milky way for many years, had a good walk and a large run of business, and was a man of substance; but it seemed that he was not destined to find his life all "milk and honey," for sorrow suddenly peeped in upon him. It was preceded by the most unbounded joy, for he beheld, and loved, and was beloved in return, by a fascinating dress-maker, who lived in the same street as himself, and compared with whose charms "Milky" thought those of Venus insignificant.

The lady's name was Miss Arabella Watkins, and, barring a defect in one ogle, and her left leg being rather shorter than the right, she was, in vulgar phraseology, "none so dusty." Miss Arabella vowed a great attachment to "Milky," and he was filled with delight and blissful anticipation. "Milky" was so impatient for her to become his wife, that he was for putting up the bans immediately; but Miss Arabella declared that she did not like to do things in such a hurry, as it wasn't decent; and, therefore, "Sky-blue," much against his will, was constrained to await her pleasure.

Everything, however, went on very well, and "Milky," after going his "walk" of an afternoon, used to walk her out, and took her to all kinds of places of amusement, and he bought her dresses and frilligigs, and never thought himself so happy as when he was making her presents.

But one unfortunate Sunday—unfortunate, indeed, for poor "Milky"—business prevented him from paying her his customary visit, and Miss Arabella Watkins walked out alone. It so happened that fancy led her as far as Kensington Gardens, and there she promenaded with no little show of "how-nice-you-look" terms with herself; and so many were the persons she there saw, that she never once thought of "Milky."

She was proceeding on her way from the gardens, when she dropped her silk purse, containing one shilling and sixpence and four-pennyworth of halfpence, and was about to stoop to pick it up, when she was prevented from doing so by a tall and fashionably-dressed swain, who picked up the purse and restored it to its fair owner with the graceful air of a knight-errant, bowing so low that his nose nearly came in contact with his toes.

Miss Arabella—oh, fatal moment for the future happiness of poor "Milky!"—was, classically speaking, "struck all of a heap." She blushed—she cirtseyed—was troubled with a short cough—and really thought the gentleman was one of the most bewitching young men she had ever seen. "Milky" was a bear compared with him—a perfect rhinoceros. She couldn't think what she could have been about ever to have fancied him.

As for the gentleman, he was perfection itself; he was a perfect Adonis. Such elegance! such grace!—and he still bowed—yes, and he smiled. Oh! such a smile; and then he sighed "Ah, ah!" and she could not help breathing responsive "a-hem!" which seemed to arouse the gentleman into a fire of admiration; for, after two or three sweet words, he begged that she would allow him to take her arm and escort her to her home.

She learned that the gentleman was a clerk in the Bank, and in good circumstances; and she thought that this was a very good chance (far preferable to the milkman) because it was so very genteel, and she should move in such a respectable "sphere," and she, therefore, determined to stick to him. The

gentleman, Mr. Alexander Squibb, was equally captivated with Arabella, and on parting, another appointment was made, and the fair Arabella prided herself upon having made a complete conquest.

But poor "Milky," when he called again, how different was his reception! The faithless Arabella merely put her head out of the window, and told him that she did not want any more of his milk, and that he needn't trouble himself to call again. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses. He knocked violently at the street-door. No answer. A second time he knocked, and rang the bell at the same time, when Arabella once more put her head out of the window, and desired him to go about his business.

"But, my dear Arabella," he cried, fervently. "Get away, you nasty dealer in chalk and water," answered Arabella; "I'm not your Arabella now; I'm somebody else's Arabella. Get away, or I'll call the police!" The milkman heard the announcement of Arabella's infidelity. He groaned, he clasped his forehead, and burst into tears.

From that time the milkman was a miserable man, and in his fits of abstraction watered his milk so much that he lost nearly all his custom. He became the butt of the boys; for instead of crying "Milk below!" he was in the habit of shouting "New Arabella, oh!"

At length he heard of the union of the faithless Arabella to Mr. Alexander Squibb, and, driven to distraction, after watering his milk, he determined to water himself, and accordingly proceeded to London Bridge for that purpose, when he was prevented by the policeman.

The Lord Mayor reprimanded the disconsolate milkman severely on his conduct, and discharged him, and "Milky" walked his chalks with many heavy sighs.