



"The old digger was waving what looked like a buffalo gun at the very least"

cud whilst standing square on a row of his cabbages—what was left of them.

I could see that things were moving towards a rapid climax, in which these mightn't be any milk for tea, so I came out from behind the tree and called out. I kept 30 yards or so between me and the British Lion just in case.

I told him that if I could take the cow Dad would square up the damage.

"No," roared the British Lion. "That damned white cow—I'll finish her like she finished off the peas. Tell the Laird of Cockpen he can come down and collect the skin. . . ."

So I took the sympathetic line. It was hard luck, all right, I said, having all those peas eaten like that. But worse things could happen at sea — and what if his hut went up in smoke one day when he was down at the claim?

I thought that would get him, for his hut had burned down a while before and he had a great fear of fire.

It got him all right, but not quite in the way I had expected. The old cove thought I was threatening to burn him out if he didn't turn over Polly. He lowered his gun and began muttering to himself, then he rammed the butt hard into the ground a couple of times as though clinching an argument.

"You can come and get your cow," he growled. "Tell the Laird he'll have to square up with me. . . ."

But I wasn't trusting him much and I made him drive Polly out of the garden, and then I came up and collected her from no-man's land. I drove her away, leaving the old digger muttering about the evil ways of youth. All the way home I was wondering how I was going to stop Polly from getting over into Cockney Terrace again. I felt that I'd never be popular with the British Lion again.

But I needn't have worried, for Polly solved that problem, and, indeed, all others, by falling over a cliff when she was reaching out for a nice clump of five-finger, and I was her only mourner.

"THE LISTENER" CROSSWORD

(Solution to No. 401)

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Clues Across

- Thoughtless advice to the hypersensitive?
- "To — Power, which seems omnipotent" (Shelley).
- Wilhelmina, Mab, and Salote, for instance.
- This expression of grief may be mental.
- Contiguity.
- Allow or hinder, according to context.
- Slang for groat?
- Probationer deprived of her ration.
- Nautical distillation.
- This animal undoubtedly has its points.
- As long as a catchword.
- Part of a thin spanner used in South Africa.
- Sojourn.
- Official list.

Clues Down

- Sure and in pieces.
- Provides uplift as well as letting you down.
- Found in the least erratic of us.
- Comfort in linen, also lace.
- Clara Butt, Sybil Thorndike or Nellie Melba?
- Receiver of stolen goods.
- What man is said to do in a certain well-known quotation; but perhaps this year it is woman who does it.
- The company is over age; does this get you tied up?
- Where Little Jack Horner sat.
- The cat is upset with gin.
- "See how the gods their gifts —" ("The Mikado").
- "Oh gracious, Why wasn't I born old and —?" (Miss Miggs, in "Barnaby Rudge").

No. 402 (Constructed by R.W.C.)

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