

Taylor Bert Leston

The So-called Human Race



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Taylor B.

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WORLD WITHOUT END

*Once upon a summer's night
Mused a mischief-making sprite,
Underneath the leafy hood
Of a fairy-haunted wood.
Here and there, in light and shade,
Ill-assorted couples strayed:
"Lord," said Puck, in elfish glee,
"Lord, what fools these mortals be!"*

*Now he sings the self-same tune
Underneath an older moon.
Life to him is, plain enough,
Still a game of blind man's buff.
If we listen we may hear
Puckish laughter always near,
And the elf's apostrophe,
"Lord, what fools these mortals be!"*

B. L. T.

Foreword

By Henry B. Fuller

Bert Leston Taylor (known the country over as “B. L. T.”) was the first of our day’s “colyumists” – first in point of time, and first in point of merit. For nearly twenty years, with some interruptions, he conducted “A Line-o’-Type or Two” on the editorial page of the *Chicago Tribune*. His broad column – broad by measurement, broad in scope, and a bit broad, now and again, in its tone – cheered hundreds of thousands at the breakfast-tables of the Middle West, and on its trains and trolleys. As the “Column” grew in reputation, “making the Line” became almost a national sport. Whoever had a happy thought, whoever could handily turn a humorous paragraph or tune a pointed jingle, was only too glad to attempt collaboration with B. L. T. Others, possessing no literary knack, chanced it with brief reports on the follies or ineptitudes of the “so-called human race.” Some of them picked up their matter on their travels – these were the “Gadders.” Others culled oddities from the provincial press, and so gave further scope to “The Enraptured Reporter,” or offered selected gems of *gaucherie* from private correspondence, and thus added to the rich yield of “The Second Post.” Still humbler helpers chipped in with queer bits of nomenclature, thereby aiding the formation of an “Academy of Immortals” – an organization fully officered by people with droll names and always tending, as will become apparent in the following pages, to enlarge and vary its roster.

All these contributors, as well as many other persons who existed independently of the “Line,” lived in the corrective fear of the “Cannery,” that capacious receptacle which yawned for the trite word and the stereotyped phrase. Our language, to B. L. T., was an honest, living growth: deadwood, whether in thought or in the expression of thought, never got by, but was marked for the burning. The “Cannery,” with its numbered shelves and jars, was a deterrent indeed, and anyone who ventured to relieve himself as “Vox Populi” or as a conventional versifier, did well to walk with care.

Over all these aids, would-be or actual, presided the Conductor himself, furnishing a steady framework by his own quips, jingles and philosophizings, and bringing each day’s exhibit to an ordered unity. The Column was more than the sum of its contributors. It was the sum of units, original or contributed, that had been manipulated and brought to high effectiveness by a skilled hand and a nature wide in its sympathies and in its range of interests.

Taylor had the gift of opening new roads and of inviting a willing public to follow. Or, to put it another way, he had the faculty of making new moulds, into which his helpers were only too glad to pour their material. Some of these “leads” lasted for weeks; some for months; others persisted through the years. The lifted wand evoked, marshalled, vivified, and the daily miracle came to its regular accomplishment.

Taylor hewed his Line in precise accord with his own taste and fancy. All was on the basis of personal preference. His chiefs learned early that so rare an organism was best left alone to function in harmony with its own nature. The Column had not only its own philosophy and its own aesthetics, but its own politics: if it seemed to contravene other and more representative departments of the paper, never mind. Its conductor had such confidence in the validity of his personal predilections and in their identity with those of “the general,” that he carried on things with the one rule of pleasing himself, certain that he should find no better rule for pleasing others. His success was complete.

His papers and clippings, found in a fairly forward state of preparation, gave in part the necessary indications for the completion of this volume. The results will perhaps lack somewhat the typographical effectiveness which is within the reach of a metropolitan daily when utilized by a “colyumist” who was also a practical printer, and they can only approximate that piquant employment

of juxtaposition and contrast which made every issue of “A Line-o’-Type or Two” a work of art in its way. But no arrangement of items from that source could becloud the essential nature of its Conductor: though “The So-Called Human Race” sometimes plays rather tartly and impatiently with men’s follies and shortcomings, it clearly and constantly exhibits a sunny, alert and airy spirit to whom all things human made their sharp appeal.

The So-Called Human Race

A LINE-O'-TYPE OR TWO

Motto: Hew to the Line, let the quips fall where they may.

SIMPLE

My readers are a varied lot;
Their tastes do not agree.
A squib that tickles A is not
At all the thing for B.

What's sense to J, is folderol
To K, but pleases Q.
So, when I come to fill the Col,
I know just what to do.

It is refreshing to find in the society columns an account of a quiet wedding. The conventional screams of a groom are rather trying.

A man will sit around smoking all day and his wife will remark: "My dear, aren't you smoking too much?" The doctor cuts him down to three cigars a day, and his wife remarks: "My dear, aren't you smoking too much?" Finally he chops off to a single after-dinner smoke, and when he lights up his wife remarks: "John, you do nothing but smoke all day long." Women are singularly observant.

NO DOUBT THERE ARE OTHERS

Sir: A gadder friend of mine has been on the road so long that he always speaks of the parlor in his house as the lobby. E. C. M.

With the possible exception of Trotzky, Mr. Hearst is the busiest person politically that one is able to wot of. Such boundless zeal! Such measureless energy! Such genius – an infinite capacity for giving pains!

Ancestor worship is not peculiar to any tribe or nation. We observed last evening, on North Clark street, a crowd shaking hands in turn with an organ-grinder's monkey.

"In fact," says an editorial on Uncongenial Clubs, "a man may go to a club to get away from congenial spirits." True. And is there any more uncongenial club than the Human Race? The service is bad, the membership is frightfully promiscuous, and about the only place to which one can escape is the library. It is always quiet there.

Sign in the Black Hawk Hotel, Byron, Ill.: "If you think you are witty send your thoughts to B. L. T., care Chicago Tribune. Do not spring them on the help. It hurts efficiency."

AN OBSERVANT KANSAN

[From the Emporia Gazette.]

The handsome clerk at the Harvey House makes this profound observation: Any girl will flirt as the train is pulling out.

THE GIRL OF THE PERIOD

She formerly talked of the weather,
The popular book, or the play;
Her old line of chat
Was of this thing or that
In the fashions and fads of the day.

But now she discusses eugenics,
And things that a pundit perplex;
She knocks you quite flat
With her new line of chat,
And her “What do you think about sex?”

“Are we all to shudder at the name of Rabelais and take to smelling salts?” queries an editorial colleague. “Are we to be a wholly lady-like nation?” Small danger, brother. Human nature changes imperceptibly, or not at all. The objection to most imitations of Rabelais is that they lack the unforced wit and humor of the original.

A picture of Dr. A. Ford Carr testing a baby provokes a frivolous reader to observe that when the babies cry the doctor probably gives them a rattle.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN “ALMOST”!

[From the Cedar Rapids Republican.]

The man who writes a certain column in Chicago can always fill two-thirds of it with quotations and contributions. But that may be called success – when they bring the stuff to you and are almost willing to pay you for printing it.

WE’LL TELL THE PLEIADES SO

Sir: “I’ll say she is,” “Don’t take it so hard,” “I’ll tell the world.” These, and other slangy explosives from our nursery, fell upon the sensitive auditory nerves of callers last evening. I am in a quandary, whether to complain to the missus or write a corrective letter to the children’s school teachers, for on the square some guy ought to bawl the kids out for fair about this rough stuff – it gets my goat. J. F. B.

Did you think “I’ll say so” was new slang? Well, it isn’t. You will find it in Sterne’s “Sentimental Journey.”

Formula for accepting a second cigar from a man whose taste in tobacco is poor: “Thank you; the courtesy is not *all* yours.”

A number of suicides are attributed to the impending conjunction of the planets and the menace of world-end. You can interest anybody in astronomy if you can establish for him a connection between his personal affairs and the movements of the stars.

WHERE 'VANGIE LIES

Rondeau Sentimental to Evangeline, the Office Goat

Where 'Vangie lies strown folios
Like Vallambrosan leaves repose,
The sad, the blithe, the quaint, the queer,
The good, the punk are scattered here —
A pile of poof in verse and prose.

And none would guess, save him who strows,
How much transcendent genius goes
Unwept, unknown, into the smear
Where 'Vangie lies.

With every opening mail it snows
Till 'Vangie's covered to her nose.
Forgetting that she is so near,
I sometimes kick her in the ear.
Then sundry piteous ba-a-a's disclose
Where 'Vangie lies.

“This sale,” advertises a candid clothier, “lasts only so long as the goods last, and that won’t be very long.”

THE SECOND POST

(Letter from an island caretaker.)

Dear Sir: Your letter came. Glad you bought a team of horses. Hilda is sick. She has diphtheria and she will die I think. Clara died this eve. She had it, too. We are quarantined. Five of Fisher’s family have got it. My wife is sick. She hain’t got it. If this thing gets worse we may have to get a doctor. Them trees are budding good. Everything is O. K.

Just as we started to light a pipe preparatory to filling this column, we were reminded of Whistler’s remark to a student who was smoking: “You should be very careful. You know you might get interested in your work and let your pipe go out.”

It is odd, and not uninteresting to students of the so-called human race, that a steamfitter or a manufacturer of suspenders who may not know the difference between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution – who may not, indeed, know anything at all – is nevertheless a bubbly-fountain of political wisdom; whereas a writer for a newspaper is capable of emitting only drivel. This may be due to the greater opportunity for meditation enjoyed by suspender-makers and steamfitters.

Janesville's Grand Hotel just blew itself on its Thanksgiving dinner. The menu included "Cheese a la Fromage."

"It is with ideas we shall conquer the world," boasts Lenine. If he needs a few more he can get them at the Patent Office in Washington, which is packed with plans and specifications of perpetual motion machines and other contraptions as unworkable as bolshevism.

HEARD IN THE BANK

A woman from the country made a deposit consisting of several items. After ascertaining the amount the receiving teller asked, "Did you foot it up?" "No, I rode in," said she. H. A. N.

The fact that Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and other great departed whose names are taken in vain every day by small-bore politicians, do not return and whack these persons over the heads with a tambourine, is almost – as Anatole France remarked in an essay on Flaubert – is almost an argument against the immortality of the soul.

Harper's Weekly refrains from comment on the shipping bill because, says its editor, "we have not been able to accumulate enough knowledge." Well! If every one refrained from expressing an opinion on a subject until he was well informed the pulp mills would go out of business and a great silence would fall upon the world.

It is pleasant to believe the sun is restoring its expended energy by condensation, and that the so-called human race is in the morning of its existence; and it is necessary that the majority should believe so, for otherwise the business of the world would not get done. The happiest cynic would be depressed by the sight of humanity sitting with folded hands, waiting apathetically for the end.

Perhaps the best way to get acquainted with the self-styled human race is to collect money from it.

TO A WELL-KNOWN GLOBE

I would not seem to slam our valued planet, —
Space, being infinite, may hold a worse;
Nor would I intimate that if I ran it
Its vapors might disperse.

Within our solar system, or without it,
May be a world less rationally run;
There may be such a geoid, but I doubt it —
I can't conceive of one.

If from the time our sphere began revolving
Until the present writing there had been
A glimmer of a promise of resolving
The muddle we are in:

If we could answer “Whither are we drifting?”
Or hope to wallow out of the morass —
I might continue boosting and uplifting;
But as it is, I pass.

So on your way, old globe, wherever aiming,
Go blundering down the endless slopes of space:
As far away the prospect of reclaiming
The so-called human race.

Gyrate, old Top, and let who will be clever;
The mess we’re in is much too deep to solve.
Me for a quiet life while you, as ever,
Continue to revolve.

“Our editorials,” announces the Tampa Tribune, “are written by members of the staff, and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the paper.” Similarly, the contents of this column are written by its conductor and the straphangers, and have nothing whatever to do with its policy.

“What, indeed?” as Romeo replied to Juliet’s query. And yet Ralph Dilley and Irene Pickle were married in Decatur last week.

He was heard to observe, coming from the theater into the thick of the wind and snow: “God help the rich; the poor can sleep with their windows shut.”

We have received a copy of the first issue of *The Fabulist*, printed in Hingham Centre, Mass., and although we haven’t had time to read it, we like one of its ideas. “Contributions,” it announces, “must be paid for in advance at space rates.”

The viewpoint of Dr. Jacques Duval (interestingly set forth by Mr. Arliss) is that knowledge is more important than the life of individual members of the so-called human race. But even Duval is a sentimentalist. He believes that knowledge is important.

Among reasonable requests must be included that of the Hotel Fleming in Petersburg, Ind.: “Gentlemen, please walk light at night. The guests are paying 75 cents to sleep and do not want to be disturbed.”

We have recorded the opinion that the Lum Tum Lumber Co. of Walla Walla, Wash., would make a good college yell; but the Wishkah Boom Co. of Wishkah, Wash., would do even better.

Some one was commiserating Impresario Dippel on his picturesque assortment of griefs. “Yes,” he said, “an impresario is a man who has trouble. If he hasn’t any he makes it.”

What is the use of expositions of other men’s philosophic systems unless the exposition is made lucid and interesting? Philosophers are much like certain musical critics: they write for one another, in a jargon which only themselves can understand.

O shade of Claude Debussy, for whom the bells of hell or heaven go tingalingaling (for wherever you are it is certain there are many bells – great bells, little bells, bells in high air, and bells beneath the sea), how we should rejoice that the beautiful things which you dreamed are as a book that is sealed to most of those who put them upon programmes; for these do not merely play them badly, they do not play them at all. Thus they cannot be spoiled for us, nor can our ear be dulled; and when the few play them that understand, they are as fresh and beautiful as on the day when first you set them down.

“The increase in the use of tobacco by women,” declares the Methodist Board, “is appalling.” Is it not? But so many things are appalling that it would be a relief to everybody if a board, or commission, or other volunteer organization were to act as a shock-absorber. Whenever an appalling situation arose, this group could be appalled for the rest of us. And we, knowing that the board would be properly appalled, should not have to worry.

Ad of a Des Moines baggage transfer company: “Don’t lie awake fearing you’ll miss your train – we’ll attend to that.” You bet they do.

The president of the Printing Press and Feeders’ (sic) union estimates that a family in New York requires \$2,362 a year to get by. Which sets us musing on the days of our youth in Manchester, N. H., when we were envied by the others of the newspaper staff because we got \$18 a week. We lived high, dressed expensively (for Manchester), and always had money for Wine and Song. How did we manage it? Blessed if we can remember.

The soi-disant human race appears to its best advantage, perhaps its only advantage, in work. The race is not ornamental, nor is it over-bright, having only enough wit to scrape along with. Work is the best thing it does, and when it seeks to avoid this, its reason for existence disappears.

“Where,” asks G. N., “can I find the remainder of that beautiful Highland ballad beginning —

‘I canna drook th’ stourie tow,
Nor ither soak my hoggie:
Hae cluttered up the muckle doon,
An’ wow but I was voggie.’”

Women regard hair as pianists regard technic: one can’t have too much of it.

The demand for regulation of the sale of wood alcohol reminds Uncle Henry of Horace Greeley’s remark when he was asked to subscribe to a missionary fund “to save his fellow-man from going to hell.” Said Hod, “Not enough of them go there now.”

A few lines on the literary page relate that Edith Alice Maitland, who recently died in London, was the original of “Alice In Wonderland.” Lewis Carroll wrote the book for her, and perhaps read chapters to her as he went along. Happy author, happy reader! If the ordering of our labors were entirely within our control we should write exclusively for children. They are more intelligent than adults, have a quicker apprehension, and are without prejudices. In addressing children, one may write quite frankly and sincerely. In addressing grown-ups the only safe medium of expression is irony.

Gleaned by R. J. S. from a Topeka church calendar: “Preaching at 8 p.m., subject ‘A Voice from Hell.’ Miss Holman will sing.”

Here is a happy little suggestion for traveling men, offered by S. B. T.: “When entering the dining room of a hotel, why not look searchingly about and rub hands together briskly?”

What could be more frank than the framed motto in the Hotel Fortney, at Viroqua, Wis. — “There Is No Place Like Home.”?

As to why hotelkeepers charge farmers less than they charge traveling men, one of our readers discovered the reason in 1899: The gadder takes a bunch of toothpicks after each meal and pouches them; the farmer takes only one, and when he is finished with it he puts it back.

If Plato were writing to-day he would have no occasion to revise his notion of democracy — “a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing equality to equals and unequals alike.”

The older we grow the more impressed we are by the amount of bias in the world. Thank heaven, the only prejudices we have are religious, racial, and social prejudices. In other respects we are open to reason.

From the calendar of the Pike county court: “Shank vs. Shinn.”

Strange all this difference should have been
’Twixt Mr. Shank and Mr. Shinn.

HOME TIES

Sir: Discovered, in Minnesota, the country delegate who goes to bed wearing the tie his daughter tied on him before he left home, because he wouldn't know how to tie it in the morning if he took it off. J. O. C.

THEY FOUND THEM IN THE ALLEY

Sir: A young man promised a charming young woman, as a birthday remembrance, a rose for every year she was old. After he had given the order for two dozen Killarneys, the florist said to his boy: "He's a good customer. Just put in half a dozen extra." M. C. G.

"When," inquires a fair reader, apropos of our remark that the only way to improve the so-called human race is to junk it and begin over again, "when does the junking begin? Because ..." Cawn't say when the big explosion will occur. But look for us in a neighboring constellation.

When they junk the human species
We will meet you, love, in Pisces.

THE TOONERVILLE TROLLEY

Sir: Did you ever ride on a street car in one of those towns where no one has any place to go and all day to get there in? The conversation runs something like this between the motorman and conductor:

Conductor: "Ding ding!" (Meaning, "I'm ready whenever you are.")

Motorman: "Ding ding!" ("Well, I'm ready.")

Conductor: "Ding ding!" ("All right, you can go.")

Motorman: "Ding ding!" ("I gotcha, Steve.")

Then they go. P. I. N.

O WILD! O STRANGE!

"That wild and strange thing, the press." – H. G. Wells

It's now too late, I fear, to change,
For ever since a child
I've always been a little strange,
And just a little wild.

I never knew the reason why,
But now the cause I guess —
What Mr. Wells, the author, calls
"That wild, strange thing, the press."

I've worked for every kind of pape

In journalism's range,
And some were tame and commonplace,
But most were wild and strange.

I ran a country paper once —
Or, rather, it ran me;
It was the strangest, wildest thing
That ever you did see.

Some years ago I settled down
And thought to find a cure
By writing books and plays and sich,
That class as litrachoor.

And for a time I lived apart,
In abject happiness;
Yet all the while I hankered for
That strange, wild thing, the press.

Its fatal fascination I
Could not resist for long;
I fled the path of litrachoor,
And once again went wrong.

I resurrected this here Col,
By which you are beguiled.
I fear you find it strange sometimes,
And always rather wild.

A delegation of Socialists has returned from Russia with the news that Sovietude leaves everything to be desired, that "things are worse than in the Czarist days." Naturally. The trouble is, the ideal is more easily achieved than retained. The ideal existed for a few weeks in Russia. It was at the time of the canning of Kerensky. Everybody had authority and nobody had it. Lincoln Steffens, beating his luminous wings in the void, beamed with joy. The ideal had been achieved; all government had disappeared. But this happy state could not last. The people who think such a happy state can last are the most interesting minds outside of the high brick wall which surrounds the institution.

When one consults what he is pleased to call his mind, this planet seems the saddest and maddest of possible worlds. And when one walks homeward under a waning moon, through Suburbia's deserted lanes, between hedges that exhale the breath of lilac and honeysuckle, the world seems a very satisfactory half-way house on the road to the Unknown. Shall we trust our intelligence or our senses? If we follow the latter it is because we wish to, not because they are a more trustworthy guide.

One must agree with Mr. Yeats, that the poetic drama is for a very small audience, but we should not like to see it so restricted. For a good share of the amusement which we get out of life comes from watching the attempts to feed caviar to the general.

THE POPOCATEPETL OF APPRECIATION

[From the Paris, Ill., News.]

For the past seven days I have been in inmate at the county jail, and through the columns of the Daily News I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Sheriff and Mrs. McCallister and Mr. McDaniel for the kindness shown to me. I have been in jail before, here and at other places, and never found a like institution kept in such a sanitary condition. The food prepared by Mrs. McCallister was excellent. In my opinion Mr. McCallister is entitled to any office.

May Claybaugh.

A copy of the second edition of The Ozark Harpist is received. The Harpist is Alys Hale, who sings on the flyleaf:

“Sing on, my harp,
Sing on some more and ever,
For sweet souls are breaking,
And fond hearts are aching,
Sing on some more and ever!”

We quite agree with Mr. Masefield that great literary work requires leisure. Lack of leisure is handicapping us in the writing of a romance. We compose it while waiting for trains, while shoveling snow and coal, while riding on the L, while shaving; and we write it on the backs of envelopes, on the covering of packages, on the margins of newspapers. The best place to write a book is in jail, where Cervantes wrote Don Quixote; but we can't find time to commit a greater misdemeanor than this column, and there is no jail sentence for that. The only compensation for the literary method we are forced to adopt is that there is a great deal of “go” in it.

Replying to an extremely dear reader: Whenever we animadvert on the human race we include ourself. We share its imperfections, and we hope we are tintured with its few virtues. As a race it impresses us as a flivver; we feel as you, perhaps, feel in your club when, looking over the members, you wonder how the dickens most of them got in.

Prof. Pickering is quoted as declaring that a race of superior beings inhabits the moon. Now we are far from claiming that the inhabitants of our geoid are superior to the moon folk, or any other folk in the solar system; but the mere fact that the Moonians are able to exist in conditions peculiar to themselves does not make them superior. The whale can live under water. Is the whale, then, superior to, say, Senator Johnson? True, it can spout farther, but it is probably inferior to Mr. Johnson in reasoning power.

The man who tells you that he believes “in principles, not men,” means – nothing at all. One would think that in the beginning God created a set of principles, and man was without form and void.

“Lost – Pair of trousers while shopping. Finder call Dinsmore 1869.” – Minneapolis Journal.

The female of the shopping species is rougher and more ruthless than the male.

“Ancient Rome, in the height of her glory, with her lavish amusements, Olympian games,” etc. – The enraptured advertiser.

The proof reader asks us if it was an eruption of Mt. Olympus that destroyed Pompeii.

GARDENS

My lady hath a garden fair,
Wherein she whiles her hours:
She chides me that I do not share
Her rage for springing flowers.

I tell her I've a garden, too,
Wherein I have to toil —
The kind that Epicurus knew,
If not so good a soil.

And I must till my patch with care,
And watch its daily needs;
For lacking water, sun, and air,
The place would run to weeds.

In this the garden of the mind,
My flowers are all too few;
Yet am I well content to find
A modest bloom or two.

My lady hath a garden fair,
Or will when buds are blown:
I've but a blossom here and there —
Poor posies, but mine own.

“Very well, here is a constructive criticism,” declared Col. Roosevelt, tossing another grenade into the administration trenches. The Colonel is our favorite constructive critic. After he has finished a bit of construction it takes an hour for the dust to settle.

Judgment day will be a complete performance for the dramatic critics. They will be able to stay for the last act.

Why is it that when a woman takes the measurements for a screen door she thinks she has to allow a couple of inches to turn in?

“Woman Lights 103 Candles With One Match.”

Huh! Helen, with one match, lit the topless towers of Ilium.

It may be – nay, it is – ungallant so to say, but – Well, have you, in glancing over the beauty contest exhibits, observed a face that would launch a thousand ships? Or five hundred?

“Learn to Speak on Your Feet,” advertises a university extension. We believe we could tell all we know about ours in five hundred words.

GOOD NIGHT!

[From the Omaha Bee.]

Mrs. Riley gave a retiring party in honor of her husband.

At the Hotel Dwan, in Benton Harbor, “rooms may be had en suite or connecting.” Or should you prefer that they lead one into another, the management will be glad to accommodate you.

Government census blanks read on top of sheet: “Kindly fill out questions below.” One of the questions is: “Can you read? Can you write? Yes or No?” This reminds a Minneapolis man of the day when he was about 15 miles from Minneapolis and read on a guide post: “15 miles to Minneapolis. If you cannot read, ask at the grocery store.”

The wave of spiritualism strikes Mr. Leacock as absurd, simply absurd. “And yet people seem to be going mad over it,” he adds. What do you mean “and yet,” Stephen? Don’t you mean “consequently”?

A Joliet social item mentions the engagement of Miss Lucille Muff De Line. We don’t recall her contribution.

Gilded Fairy Tales

(Revised and regilded for comprehension by the children of the very rich.)

THE BABES IN THE WOOD

I

Once upon a time there dwelt in a small but very expensive cottage on the outskirts of a pine forest a gentleman with his wife and two children. It was a beautiful estate and the neighborhood was the very best. Nobody for miles around was worth less than five million dollars.

One night the gentleman tapped at his wife's boudoir, and receiving permission to enter, he said: "Pauline, I have been thinking about our children. I overheard the governess say to-day that they are really bright and interesting, and as yet unspoiled. Perhaps if they had a fair chance they might amount to something."

"Reginald," replied his wife, "you are growing morbid about those children. You will be asking to see them next." She shrugged her gleaming shoulders, and rang for the maid to let down her hair.

"Remember our own youth and shudder, Pauline," said the gentleman. "It's a shame to allow Percival and Melisande to grow up in this atmosphere."

"Well," said the lady petulantly, "what do you suggest?"

"I think it would be wise and humane to abandon them. The butler or the chauffeur can take them into the wood and lose them and some peasant may find and adopt them, and they may grow up to be worthy citizens. At least it is worth trying."

"Do as you please," said the lady. "The children are a collaboration; they are as much yours as mine."

This conversation was overheard by little Melisande, who had stolen down from her little boudoir in her gold-flowered nightdress for a peep at her mamma, whom she had not seen for a long, long time. The poor child was dreadfully frightened, and crept upstairs weeping to her brother.

"Pooh!" said Percival, who was a brave little chap. "We shall find our way out of the wood, never fear. Give me your pearl necklace, Melisande."

The wondering child dried her eyes and fetched the necklace, and Percival stripped off the pearls and put them in the pocket of his velvet jacket. "They can't lose us, sis," said he.

II

In the morning the butler took the children a long, long way into the woods, pretending that he had discovered a diamond mine; and, bidding them stand in a certain place till he called, he went away and did not return. Melisande began to weep, as usual, but Percival only laughed, for he had dropped a pearl every little way as they entered the wood, and the children found their way home without the least difficulty. Their father was vexed by their cleverness, but their mamma smiled.

"It's fate, Reginald," she remarked. "They were born for the smart set, and they may as well fulfill their destinies."

"Let us try once more," said the gentleman. "Give them another chance."

When the servant called the children the next morning Percival ran to get another pearl necklace, but the jewel cellar was locked, and the best he could do was to conceal a four-pound bunch of hothouse grapes under his jacket. This time they were taken twice as far into the wood in search of the diamond mine; and alas! when the butler deserted them Percival found that the birds had eaten every grape he had dropped along the way. They were now really lost, and wandered all day without coming out anywhere, and at night they slept on a pile of leaves, which Percival said was much more like camping out than their summer in the Adirondacks. All next day they wandered, without seeing sign of a road or a château, and Melisande wept bitterly.

“I am so hungry,” exclaimed the poor child. “If we only could get a few *marrons glacés* for breakfast!”

“I could eat a few macaroons myself,” said Percival.

III

On the afternoon of the third day Percival and Melisande came to a strange little cottage fashioned of gingerbread, but as the children had never tasted anything so common as gingerbread they did not recognize it. However, the cottage felt soft and looked pretty enough to eat, so Percival bit off a piece of the roof and declared it was fine. Melisande helped herself to the doorknob, and the children might have eaten half the cottage had not a witch who lived in it come out and frightened them away. The children ran as fast as their legs could work, for the witch looked exactly like their governess, who tried to make them learn to spell and do other disagreeable tasks.

Presently they came out on a road and saw a big red automobile belonging to nobody in particular. It was the most beautiful car imaginable. The hubs were set with pigeon blood rubies and the spokes with brilliants; the tires were set with garnets to prevent skidding, and the hood was inlaid with diamonds and emeralds. Even Percival and Melisande were impressed. One door stood invitingly open and the children sprang into the machine. They were accustomed to helping themselves to everything that took their fancy; they had inherited the instinct.

Percival turned on the gas. “Hang on to your hair, sis!” he cried, and he burnt up the road all the way home, capsizing the outfit in front of the mansion and wrecking the automobile.

Their mamma came slowly down the veranda steps with a strange gentleman by her side. “These are the children, Edward,” she said, picking them up, uninjured by the spill. “Children, this is your new papa.”

The gentleman shook hands with them very pleasantly and said he hoped that he should be their papa long enough to get really acquainted with them. At which remark the lady smiled and tapped him with her fan.

And they lived happily, after their fashion, ever afterward.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD

I

Once upon a time there was a little girl who was the prettiest creature imaginable. Her mother was excessively fond of her, and saw her as frequently as possible, sometimes as often as once a month. Her grandmother, who doted on her even more, had made for her in Paris a little red riding hood of velvet embroidered with pearl passementerie, which became the child so well that everybody in her set called her Little Red Riding-Hood.

One day her mother said to her: “Go, my dear, and see how your grandmother does, for I hear she has been ill with indigestion. Carry her this filet and this little pot of foie gras.”

The grandmother lived in a secluded and exclusive part of the village, in a marble cottage situated in the midst of a wooded park. Little Red Riding-Hood got out of the motor when she came to the park, telling the chauffeur she would walk the rest of the way. She hardly passed the hedge when she met a Wolf.

“Whither are you going?” he asked, looking wistfully at her.

“I am going to see my grandmother, and carry her a filet and a little pot of foie gras from my mamma.”

“Well,” said the Wolf, “I’ll go see her, too. I’ll go this way and you go that, and we shall see who will be there first.”

The Wolf ran off as fast as he could, and was first at the door of the marble cottage. The butler informed him that Madame was not at home, but he sprang through the door, knocking the servant over, and ran upstairs to Madame’s boudoir.

“Who’s there?” asked the grandmother, when the Wolf tapped at the door.

“Your grandchild, Little Red Riding-Hood,” replied the Wolf, counterfeiting the child’s voice, “who has brought you a filet and a little pot of foie gras.”

II

The good grandmother, who had eaten nothing for two days except a mallard, with a pint of champagne, cried out hungrily, “Come in, my dear.”

The Wolf ran in, and, falling upon the old lady, ate her up in a hurry, for he had not tasted food for a whole week. He then got into the bed, and presently Little Red Riding-Hood tapped at the door.

The Wolf pitched his voice as high and unpleasant as he could, and called out, “What is it, Hawkins?”

“It isn’t Hawkins,” replied Little Red Riding-Hood. “It is your grandchild, who has brought you a filet and a little pot of foie gras.”

“Come in, my dear,” responded the Wolf. And when the child entered he said: “Put the filet and the little pot of foie gras on the gold tabouret, and come and lie down with me.”

Little Red Riding-Hood did not think it good form to go to bed so very, very late in the morning, but as she expected to inherit her grandmother’s millions she obediently took off her gold-flowered frock, and her pretty silk petticoat, and her dear little diamond stomacher, and got into bed, where, amazed at the change for the better in her grandmother’s appearance, she said to her:

“Grandmother, how thin your arms have got!”

“I have been dieting, my dear.”

“Grandmother, how thin your legs have got!”

“The doctor makes me walk every day.”

“Grandmother, how quiet you are!”

“This isn’t a symphony concert hall, my dear.”

“Grandmother, what has become of your diamond-filled teeth?”

“These will do, my dear.”

And saying these words the wicked Wolf fell upon Little Red Riding-Hood and ate her all up.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

I

Once upon a time there was a very wealthy widow who lived in a marble cottage approached by a driveway of the same stone, bordered with rhododendrons. She had an only son, Jack – a giddy, thoughtless boy, but very kindhearted, as many a hard-working chorus girl had reason to remember. Jack was an idle fellow, whose single accomplishment was driving an automobile, in which he displayed remarkable skill and recklessness; there was hardly a day he did not run over something or somebody. One day he bumped a very heavy workingman, whose remains messed up the car so badly that Jack’s mother lost patience with him. “My dear,” she said, “why don’t you put your skill and energy to some use? If only you would slay the giant Ennui, who ravages our country, you would be as great a hero in our set as St. George of England was in his.”

Jack laughed. “Let him but get in the way of my car,” said he, “and I’ll knock him into the middle of next month.”

The boy set out gaily for the garage, to have the motor repaired, and on the way he met a green-goods grocer who displayed a handful of beautiful red, white, and blue beans. Jack stopped to look at what he supposed was a new kind of poker chip, and the man persuaded the silly youth to exchange the automobile for the beans.

When he brought home the “chips” his mother laughed loudly. “You are just like your father; he didn’t know beans, either,” she said. “Dig a hole in the tennis court, Jack, and plant your poker chips, and see what will happen.”

Jack did as he was told to do, and the next morning he went out to see whether anything had happened. What was his amazement to find that a mass of twisted stalks had grown out of his jackpot and climbed till they covered the high cliff back of the tennis court, disappearing above it.

II

Jack came of a family of climbers. His mother had climbed into society and was still climbing. The funny thing about climbers is that they never deceive anybody; every one knows just what they are up to. As Jack had inherited the climbing passion he began without hesitation to ascend the beanstalk, and when he reached the top he was as tired as if he had spent the day laying bricks or selling goods behind a counter; but he perked up when he beheld a fairy in pink tights who looked very much like a coryphée in the first row of “The Girly Girl.”

“Is this a roof garden?” asked Jack, looking about him curiously.

“No, kid,” replied the Fairy, tapping him playfully with her spear. “You are in the Land of Pleasure, and in yonder castle lives a horrid Giant called Ennui, who bores everybody he catches to death.”

Jack put on a brave face and lighted a cigarette. “Has he ever caught you, little one?” he asked.

“No,” she laughed, “but I’m knocking wood. Fairies don’t get bored until they grow old, or at least middle-aged.”

“It’s a wonder,” said Jack, “that the Giant doesn’t bore himself to death some day.”

“He might,” said the Fairy, “if it were not for his wonderful talking harp, which keeps harping upon Socialism, and the single tax, and the rights of labor, and a lot of other mush; but you see it keeps Ennui stirred up, so that he is never bored entirely stiff.”

“Well,” said Jack, “me for that harp, if I die for it!” And thanking Polly Twinkletoes for her information, and promising to buy her a supper when he got his next allowance, he sauntered toward the castle. As he paused before the great gate it was opened suddenly by a most unpleasant looking giantess.

“Ho! ho!” she cried, seizing Jack by the arm, “you’re the young scamp who sold me that lightning cleaner last week. I’ll just keep you till you take the spots out of my husband’s Sunday pants. If you don’t, he’ll knock the spots out of *you!*”

III

While the Giantess spoke she dragged Jack into the castle. “Into this wardrobe,” said she; “and mind you don’t make the smallest noise, or my man will wring your neck. He takes a nap after dinner, and then you’ll have a chance to demonstrate that grease-eradicator you sold me last week.”

The wardrobe was as big as Jack’s yacht, and the key-hole as big as a barrel, so the boy could see everything that took place without. Presently the castle was shaken as if by an earthquake, and a great voice roared: “Wife! wife! I smell gasoline!”

Jack trembled, remembering that in tinkering around his car that morning he had spilled gas on his clothes.

“Be quiet!” replied the Giantess. “It’s only the lightning-cleaner which that scamp of a peddler sold me the other day.”

The Giant ate a couple of sheep; then, pushing his plate away, he called for his talking harp. And while he smoked, the harp rattled off a long string of stuff about the equal liability of all men to labor, the abolition of the right of inheritance, and kindred things. Jack resolved that when he got hold of the harp he would serve it at a formal dinner, under a great silver cover. What a sensation it would cause among his guests when it began to sing its little song about the abolition of the right of inheritance!

In a short time the Giant fell asleep, for the harp, like many reformers, became wearisome through exaggeration of statement. Jack slipped from the wardrobe, seized the harp, and ran out of the castle.

“Master! Master!” cried the music-maker. “Wake up! We are betrayed!”

Glancing back, Jack saw the Giant striding after him, and gave himself up for lost; but at that moment he heard his name called, and he saw the Fairy, Polly Twinkletoes, beckoning to him from a taxicab. Jack sprang into the machine and they reached the beanstalk a hundred yards ahead of the giant. Down the stalk they slipped and dropped, the Giant lumbering after. Once at the bottom, Jack ran to the garage and got out his man-killer, and when the Giant reached ground he was knocked, as Jack had promised, into the middle of the proximate month.

Our hero married the Fairy, much against his mother’s wishes; she knew her son all too well, and she felt certain that she should soon come to know Polly as well, and as unfavorably. Things turned out no better than she had expected. After a month of incompatibility, and worse, Polly consented to a divorce in consideration of one hundred thousand dollars, and they all lived happily ever afterward.

A LINE-O'-TYPE OR TWO

“Fay ce que voudras.”

“FAY CE QUE VOULDRAS.”

Do what thou wilt. Long known to fame
That ancient motto of Thélème.
To this our abbey hither bring,
Wisdom or wit, thine offering,
Or low or lofty be thine aim.

Here is no virtue in a name,
But all are free to play the game.
Here, welcome as the flow'rs of Spring,
Do what thou wilt.

Each in these halls a place may claim,
And is, if sad, alone to blame.
Kick up thy heels and dance and sing —
To any wild conceit give wing —
Be fool or sage, 'tis all the same —
Do what thou wilt.

That was an amusing tale of the man who complained of injuries resulting from a loaded seegar. He knew when he smoked it that it was a trick weed, and knew that it would explode, but he “didn’t know when.” He reminds us very strongly of a parlor bolshevist.

“Man,” as they sing in “Princess Ida,” “is nature’s sole mistake.” And he never appears more of a rummy than when some woman kills herself for him, in his embarrassed presence. His first thought is always of himself.

A history exam in a public school contains this delightful information: “Patrick Henry said, ‘I rejoice that I have but one country to live for.’”

Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. There are some who, like a certain capable rounder, lately departed, have time to manage a large business, maintain two or more domestic establishments, razz, jazz, get drunk, and fight; while others of us cannot find time in the four and twenty hours to do half the things we wish to achieve. Although your orator has nothing to do but “write a few headlines and go home,” as Old Bill Byrne says, night overtakes him with half his chores undone. Time gallops withal.

“They know what they like.”

There are exceptions. The author of “Set Down in Malice” mentions a number, the most conspicuous being Ernest Newman. And we recall an exception, Mr. Jimmie Whittaker, merriest of critics, who was so far from knowing what he liked that he adopted the plan, in considering the Symphony concerts, of praising the even numbers one week and damning the even numbers the following week.

Like Ernest Newman, we shall never again hear the Chopin Funeral March without being reminded of Mr. Sidgwick’s summary: “Most funeral marches seem to cheer up in the middle and

become gloomy again. I suppose the idea is, (1) the poor old boy's dead; (2) well, after all, he's probably gone to heaven; (3) still, anyhow, the poor old boy's dead."

Our readers, we swear, know everything. One of them writes from La Crosse that Debussy's "Canope" has nothing to do with the planet Canopus, but refers to the ancient Egyptian city of that name. Mebbe so (we should like proof of it), but what of it? – as Nero remarked when they told him Rome was afire. The Debussy music does as well for the star as for the city. It is ethereal, far away, and it leaves off in mid-air. There is a passage in "Orpheus and Eurydice" which is wedded to words expressing sorrow; but, as has been pointed out, the music would go as well or better with words expressing joy.

"Lincoln," observed Old Bill Byrne, inserting a meditative pencil in the grinder, "said you can fool all the people some of the time. But that was in the sixties, before the Colyum had developed a bunch of lynx-eyed, trigger-brained, hawk-swooping, owl-pouncing fans that nobody can fool for a holy minute."

Fishing for errors in a proof-room is like fishing for trout: the big ones always get away. Or, as Old Bill Byrne puts it, while you're fishing for a minnow a whale comes up and bites you in the leg.

Whene'er we take our walks abroad we meet acquaintances who view with alarm the immediate future of the self-styled human race; but we find ourself unable to share their apprehension. We do not worry about lead, or iron, or any other element. And human nature is elemental. You can flatten it, as in Russia; you can bend, and twist, and pound it into various forms, but you cannot decompose it. And so the "new order," while perhaps an improvement on the old, will not be so very different. Britannia will go on ruling the waves, and Columbia, not Utopia, will be the gem of the ocean.

"Woman's Club Will Hear Dr. Ng Poon Chew." – Minneapolis News.

We believe this is a libel on Dr. Poon.

The Greek drachma is reported to be in a bad way. Perhaps a Drachma League could uplift it and tide it over the crisis.

THE DELIRIOUS CRITIC

[From the Sheridan, Wyo., Enterprise.]

Replete with fine etherially beautiful melody and graceful embellishments, it represents Mozart at his best, expressing in a form as clear and finely finished as a delicate ivory carving that mood of restful, sunny, impersonal optimism which is the essence of most of his musical creations. It is like some finely wrought Greek idyl, the apotheosis of the pastoral, perfect in detail, without apparent effort, gently, tenderly emotional, without a trace of passionate intensity or restless agitation, innocent and depending, as a mere babe. It is the mood of a bright, cloudless day on the upland pastures, where happy shepherds watch their peaceful flocks, untroubled by the storm and stress of our modern life, a mood so foreign to the hearts and environment of most present day human beings, that it is rarely understood by player or hearer, and still more rarely enjoyed. It seems flat and insipid as tepid water to the fevered lips of the young passion-driven, ambition-goaded soul in its first stormy period of struggle and achievement; but later, it is welcomed as the answer to that inarticulate, but ever increasingly frequent, sign for peace and tranquil beauty.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MICHIGAN WOODS

Sir: Last night I disturbed the family catawollapus – née Irish – with, "Are you asleep, Maggie?" "Yis, sor." "Too bad, Maggie; the northern lights are out, and you ought to see them." "I'm sorry, sor,

but I'm sure I filled them all this morning." What I intended to say was that I have taken the liberty of christening a perfectly good he-pointer pup Jet Wimp. Hope it is not lese majesté against the revered president of the Immortals. Salvilinus Fontanalis.

A Sheboygan merchant announces a display of "what Dame Nature has decreed women shall wear this fall and winter."

In considering additions to the Academy of Immortals shall Anna Quaintance be forgot? She lives in Springfield.

A box-office man has won the politeness prize. Topsy-turvy world, did you say?

We lamp by the rural correspondence that Mrs. Alfred Snow of Chili, Wis., is on her way to Bismarck, N. D. It is suggested that she detour to Hot Springs and warm up a bit.

BLAKE COMES BACK

Little Ford, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee gas and bade thee speed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee cushions hard and tight,
Bumpy tires small and white;
Gave thee such a raucous voice,
Making all the deaf rejoice?
Little Ford, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Ford, I'll tell thee,
Little Ford, I'll tell thee.
He is callèd by thy name,
Henry Ford, the very same.
He is meek and he is mild,
Is pacific as a child.
He a child and thou a Ford,
You are callèd the same word.
Little Ford, God bless thee!
Little Ford, God bless thee!
B. L.

EVERYBODY CAME IN A FORD

[From the Milwaukee Sentinel.]

Miss Evelyn Shallow, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Shallow, and Raymond Bridger, both of Little River, were married recently at Oconto.

Considering the pictorial advertisements, A. B. Walkley finds that that triumphant figure of the active, bustling world, the business man, divides his day somewhat as follows: He begins with his toilet, which seems to center in or near his chin, which is prominent, square, firm, and smooth;

even the rich, velvety lather cannot disguise it. The business man collects safety razors; he collects collars, too. He seems to be in the habit of calling in his friends to see how perfectly his shirt fits at the neck. Once dressed, he goes to his office and is to be found at an enormous desk bristling with patent devices, pleasantly gossiping with another business man. You next find him in evening dress at the dinner table, beaming at the waiter who has brought him his favorite sauce. Lastly you have a glimpse of him in pajamas, discoursing with several other business men in pajamas, all sitting cross-legged and smoking enormous cigars. This is the end of a perfect business day.

Mr. Kipling has obtained an injunction and damages because a medicine company used a stanza of his "If" to boost its pills. While we do not think much of the verses, we are glad the public is reminded that the little things which a poet dashes off are as much private property as a bottle of pills or a washing machine.

Animals in a new Noah's Ark are made correctly to the scale designed by a London artist who studies the beasts in the Zoo. Would you buy such an ark for a child? Neither would we.

Social nuances are indicated by a farmer not far from Chicago in his use of table coverings, as follows: For the family, oil cloth; for the school teacher, turkey red; for the piano tuner, white damask.

SHE SAT APART

Sir: We were talking across the aisle. Presently the girl who sat alone leaned over and said: "You and the lady take this seat. I'm not together." A. H. H. A.

THE G. P. P

Sir: What is the gadder's pet peeve? Mine is to be aroused by the hotel maid who jiggles the doorknob at 8 a.m., when the little indicator shows the room is still locked from the inside. It happened to me to-day at the Blackhawk in Davenport. W. S.

BEG YOUR PARDON

W. S. writes, after a long session with his boss, that the recent announcement he was disturbed at 8 o'clock by the rattling of his hotel door was a typographical error committed in this office (sic), the hour as stated by him really having been 6.30 a.m.

The manager of the Hotel Pomeroy, Barbados, W. I., warns: "No cigarettes or cocktails served to married ladies without husband's consent."

It is years since we read "John Halifax, Gentleman," but we must dust off the volume. The Japanese translation has a row of asterisks and the editor's explanation: "At this point he asked her to marry him."

Gadders have many grievances, and one of them is the small-town grapefruit. One traveler offers the stopper of a silver flask for an authentic instance of a grapefruit served without half of the tough interior thrown in for good measure.

If Jedge Landis has time to attend to another job, a great many people would like to see him take hold of the Senate and establish in it the confidence of the public. It would be a tougher job than baseball reorganization, but it is thought he could swing it.

YES?

You may fancy it is easy,

When the world is fighting drunk,
To compile a colyum wheezy
With a lot of airy junk —
To maintain a mental quiet
And a philosophic ca'm,
And to give, amid the riot,
Not a dam.

You may think it is no trick to
Can the topic militaire,
And determinedly stick to
Jape and jingle light as air —
To be pertly paragraphic
And to jollity inclined,
In an evenly seraphic
State of mind.

When our anger justified is,
And the nation's on the brink;
When Herr Dernburg – durn his hide! – is
To be chased across the drink;
When the cabinet is meeting,
And the ultimatums fly,
And the tom-toms are a-beating
A defy;

When it's raining gall and bitters —
You may think it is a pipe
To erect a Tower of Titters
With a lot of lines o' type,
To be whimsical and wheezy,

Full of { quip and quirk and quiz.
 { quibbles queer and quaint.
Do you fancy *that* is easy?
Well—it { is.
 { ain't.

The dissolution of Farmer Pierson, of Princeton, Ill., from rough-on-rats administered, it is charged, by his wife and her gentleman friend, is a murder case that reminds us of New England, where that variety of triangle reaches stages of grewsomeness surpassed only by “The Love of Three Kings.” How often, in our delirious reporter days, did we journey to some remote village in Vermont or New Hampshire, to inquire into the passing of an honest agriculturist whose wife, assisted by the hired man, had spiced his biscuits with arsenic or strychnine.

On the menu of the Woman's City Club: “Scrambled Brains.” Do you wonder, my dear?

We quite understand that if Mr. Moiseiwitsch is to establish himself with the public he must play old stuff, even such dreadful things as the Mozart-Liszt “Don Giovanni.” It is with Chopin waltzes and Liszt rhapsodies that a pianist plays an audience into a hall, but he should put on some stuff to play the audience out with. Under this arrangement those of us who have heard Chopin's Fantasie as often as we can endure may come late, while those who do not “understand” Debussy, Albeniz, and

other moderns may leave early. The old stuff is just as good to-day as it was twenty years ago, but some of us ancients have got past that stage of musical development.

THE MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT

Sir: This story was related to me by Modeste Mignon, who hesitates to give it to the “Embarrassing Moments” editor:

“Going down Michigan avenue one windy day, I stopped to fix my stocking, which had come unfastened. Just as my hands were both engaged a gust of wind lifted one of my hair tabs and exposed almost the whole of my left ear. I was never so embarrassed in my life.” Ballymooney.

THE ENRAPTURED REPORTER

[From the White Salmon Enterprise.]

The bridal couple stood under festoons of Washington holly, and in front of a circling hedge of flowering plants, whose delicate pink blossoms gave out a faint echo of the keynote of the bride’s ensemble.

EVERYTHING CONSIDERED, THE COMMA IS THE MOST USEFUL MARK OF PUNCTUATION

[From the El Paso Journal.]

Prof. Bone, head of the rural school department of the Normal University, gave an address to the parents and teachers of Eureka, Saturday evening.

Galesburg’s Hotel Custer has sprung a new one on the gadders. Bub reports that, instead of the conventional “Clerk on Duty, Mr. Rae,” the card reads: “Greeter, Rudie Hawks.”

A communication to La Follette’s Magazine is signed by W.E.T.S. Nurse, N. Y. City. What is the “S” for?

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

[From the Walsh County, N. D., Record.]

A quiet wedding occurred Friday, when Francis A. Tardy of Bemidji, Minn., was united in marriage to Miss Leeva Ness.

THE ENRAPTURED REPORTER; OR, IT INDEED WAS

[From the St. Andrew's Bay, Fla., News.]

Mrs. Paddock, Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Templeton, and Mrs. Cottingham, all of whom are visiting Mrs. Turesdel, the hostess of Monday's picnic, were keenly appreciative of such bits of beauty as the day revealed. Florida, herself a hostess of lavish hospitality, seemed to be more radiant, and when night came and the boat pulled her way out into the bay, still another surprise awaited the northerners. In the wake of the boat shimmered a thousand, yea, a million jewels. The little waves crested with opals and pearls. The weirdly beautiful phenomena filled the visitors with delighted wonder as they leaned over the water and watched the flashing colors born of the night. As the lights of our city hove into view, the voice of Mrs. Templeton, a voice marvelously sweet, sang "The End of a Perfect Day," as indeed it was.

A "masquerade pie supper" was given in Paris, Ill., last week. The kind of pie used is not mentioned, but it must have been either cranberry or sweet potato.

CONTRETEMPS IN WYOMING SOCIETY

[From the Sheridan Post.]

No finer dressed party of men and women ever assembled together in this city than those who took part in the ball given by the bachelors of Sheridan to their married friends. Many of the costumes deserve mention, but the Post man is not capable of describing them properly. The supper and refreshments were of the kind that all appreciated, and was served at just the right time by obliging waiters, who seemed to enter into the spirit of the times and make every one feel satisfied. Only one deplorable thing transpired at the dance, and it was nobody's fault. Dr. Newell had the misfortune to lean too far forward when bowing to a lady and tear his pants across the seams. He had filled his program, and had a beautiful partner for each number, but he had to back off and sit down.

MERCIFULLY SEPARATED

Sir: A fellow-gadder is sitting opposite me at this writing table. It seems that some old friend of his in Texas, out of work, funds, and food, has written him for aid, and he is replying: "Glad you're so far away, so we sha'n't see each other starve to death." Sim Nic.

Freedom shrieked when Venizelos fell. But Freedom has grown old and hysterical, and shrieks on very little occasion.

The attitude of the Greeks toward "that fine democrat Venizelos" reminds our learned contemporary the Journal of the explanation given by the ancient Athenian who voted against Aristides: he was tired of hearing him called "the Just." It is an entirely human sentiment, one of the few that justify the term "human race." It swept away Woodrow the Idealist, and all the other issues that the parties set up. If it were not for the saturation point, the race would be in danger of becoming inhuman.

The allies quarreled among themselves during the war, and have been quarreling ever since. A world war and a world peace are much too big jobs for any set of human heads.

ACADEMY NOTES

Sir: If there is a school of expression connected with the Academy I nominate for head of it Elizabeth Letzkuss, principal of the Greene school, Chicago. Calcitrosus.

Members of the Academy will be pleased to know that their fellow-Immortal, Mr. Gus Wog, was elected in North Dakota.

We regret to learn that one of our Immortals, Mr. Tinder Tweed, of Harlan, Ky., has been indicted for shooting on the highway.

TO MARY GARDEN – WITH A POSTSCRIPT

So wonderful your art, if you preferred
Drayma to opry, you'd be all the mustard;
For you (ecstatic pressmen have averred)
Have Sarah Bernhardt larruped to a custard.

So marvelous your voice, too, if you cared
With turns and trills and tra-la-las to dazzle,
You'd have (enraptured critics have declared)
All other singers beaten to a frazzle.

So eloquent your legs, were it your whim
To caper nimbly in a classic measure,
Terpsichore (entranced reviewers hymn)
Would swoon upon her lyre for very pleasure.

If there be aught you *cannot* do, 'twould seem
The world has yet that something to discover.
One has to hand it to you. You're a scream.
And 'tis a joy to watch you put it over.

Postscriptum

If there be any test you can't survive,
The present test will mean your crucifying;
But I am laying odds of eight to five
That you'll come thro' with all your colors flying.

It is chiefly a matter of temperament. And more impudence and assurance is required to crack a safe or burglarize a dwelling than to cancel a shipment of goods in order to avoid a loss; but one is as honest a deed as the other. Or it would be better to say that one is as poor policy as the other. For it is not claimed that man is an honest animal; it is merely agreed that honesty profits him most in the long run.

ACADEMY JOTTINGS

J. P. W.: “I present Roley Akers of Boone, Ia., as director of the back-to-the-farm movement.”

C. M. V.: “For librarian to the Immortals I nominate Mrs. Bessie Hermann Twaddle, who has resigned a similar position in Tulare county, California.”

This world cannot be operated on a sentimental basis. The experiment has been made on a small scale, and it has always failed; on a large scale it would only fail more magnificently. People who are naturally kind of heart, and of less than average selfishness, wish that the impossible might be compassed, but, unless they are half-witted, or are paid agitators, they recognize that the impossible is well named. Self-interest is the core of human nature, and before that core could be appreciably modified, if ever, the supply of heat from the sun would be so reduced that the noblest enthusiasm would be chilled. The utmost achievable in this sad world is an enlightened self-interest. This we expect of the United States when the peace makers gather. Anything more selfish would be a reproach to our professed principles. Anything less selfish would be a reproach to our intelligence.

I SHOT AN ARROW INTO THE AIR, IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH MISS BURROUGHS' HAIR

[From the Dallas Bulletin.]

We quote Miss Burroughs: “I don't think B. L. T. is so good any more – it takes an intelligent person to comprehend his meaning half the time.”

The world is running short of carbonic acid, the British Association is told by Prof. Petrie. “The decomposition of a few more inches of silicates over the globe will exhaust the minute fraction of carbonic acid that still remains, and life will then become impossible.” But cheer up. The Boston Herald assures us that “there is no immediate cause of alarm.” Nevertheless we are disturbed. We had figured on the sun growing cold, but if we are to run out of carbonic acid before the sun winds up its affairs, a little worry will not be amiss. However, everybody will be crazy as a hatter before long, so what does it matter? Ten years ago Forbes Winslow wrote, after studying the human race and the lunacy statistics of a century: “I have no hesitation in stating that the human race has degenerated and is still progressing in a downward direction. We are gradually approaching, with the decadence of youth, a near proximity to a nation of madmen.”

AS JOYCE KILMER MIGHT HAVE SAID

[Kit Morley in the New York Evening Post.]

“The Chicago Tribune owns forests of pulp wood.”

– Full-page advt.

I think that I shall never see
Aught lovely as a pulpwood tree.

A tree that grows through sunny noons
To furnish sporting page cartoons.

A tree whose fibre and whose pith
Will soon be Gumps by Sidney Smith,

And make to smile and eke *ha ha!* go
The genial people of Chicago.

A tree whose grace, toward heaven rising,
Men macerate for advertising —

A tree that lifts her arms and laughs
To be made into paragraphs ...

How enviable is that tree
That's growing pulp for B. L. T.

“Remake the World” is a large order – too large for statesmen. Two lovers underneath the Bough may remake the world, remold it nearer to the heart's desire – or come as near to it as possible; but not a gathering of political graybeards. For better or worse the world is made; all we can do is modify it here and there.

THE SECOND POST

[A Swedish lady seeks congenial employment.]

Madam: A few days ago I were happy enough to meet Mrs. J. Hansley and she told me that you migh possible want to engage a lady to work for you. I am swede, in prime of like, in superb health, queite of habits, and can handle a ordinary house. I can give references as to characktar. If you want me would you kindly write and state wadges. Or if you don't, would you do a stranger a favour and put me in thuch wit any friend that want help. I hold a very good situation in a way, but I am made to eat in the kitchen and made to feel in every way that I am a inferior. I dont like that. I dont want a situation of that kind. They are kind to me most certainly in a way, but as I jused to be kind to my favorite saddle horse. I dont want that kind of soft soap. Yours very respectkfully, etc.

A WISCONSIN PARABLE

[From the Fort Atkinson Union.]

A friend asks us why we keep on pounding La Follette. He says there is no use pounding away at a man after he's dead. Maybe we are like the man who was whaling a dead dog that had killed his sheep. “What are you whaling that cur for?” said a neighbor. “There is no use in that; he's dead.” “Well,” said the man, “I'll learn him, damn him, that there is punishment after death.”

Another way to impress upon the world the fact that you have lived in it is to scratch matches on walls and woodwork. A banged door leaves no record except in the ear processes of the persons sitting near the door, whereas match scratches are creative work.

Lives of such men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Match-marks on the walls of time.

HE SHOULD

Sir: Mr. Treetop, 6 feet 2 inches, is a porter at the St. Nicholas Hotel, Decatur. Would he add anything to the landscape gardening surrounding the Academy of Immortals? W. N. C.

WHY THE EDITOR BEAT IT

[From the Marengo Republican-News.]

Baptist Church, 7:30 p.m. – Popular evening service. Subject, “Fools and Idiots.” A large number are expected.

Speaking again of “experience essential but not necessary,” it was a gadder who observed to a fellow traveler in the smoker: “It is not only customary, but we have been doing it right along.”

“Even now,” remarks an editorial colleague, “the person who says ‘It is I’ is conscious of a precise effort which exaggerates the ego.” No such effort is made by one of our copyreaders, who never changes ‘who’ or ‘whom’ in a piece of telegraph copy; because, says he, “I never know which is right.”

HERE IT IS AGAIN

[From the classified ads.]

Saleslady, attractive, energetic, ambitious hustler. Selling experience essential but not necessary. Fred’k H. Bartlett & Co.

Her attractiveness, perchance, is also essential but not necessary.

We see by the lith’ry notes that Vance Thompson has published another book. Probably we told you about the farmer in Queechee at whose house Vance boarded one summer. “He told me he was going to do a lot of writing,” said the h. h. s. of t. to us, “and got me to hitch up and drive over to Pittsfield and buy him a quart bottle of ink. And dinged if he didn’t give me the bottle, unopened, when he went back to town in the fall.”

AFTER READING HARVEY’S WEEKLY

I love Colonel Harvey,

His stuff is so warm,
And if you don't bite him
He'll do you no harm.

I'll sit by the fire
And feed him raw meat,
And Harvey will roar me
Clear off'n my feet.

The Nobel prize for the best split infinitive has been awarded to the framer of the new administrative code of the state of Washington, which contains this:

“To, in case of an emergency requiring expenditures in excess of the amount appropriated by the legislature for any institution of the state, state officer, or department of the state government, and upon the written request of the governing authorities of the institution, the state officer, or the head of the department, and in case the board by a majority vote of all its members determines that the public interest requires it, issue a permit in writing,” etc.

“‘When this art reaches so high a standard the Post deems it a duty to publicly commend it.’ – Edward A. Grozier, Editor and Publisher the Boston Post.”

But ought a Bostonian to split his infinitives in public? It doesn't seem decent.

Every now and then a suburban train falls to pieces, and the trainmen wonder why. “What do you know about that?” they say. “It was as good as new this morning.” It never occurs to them that the slow but sure weakening of the rolling stock is due to Rule 7 in the “Instructions to Trainmen,” which requires conductors and brakemen to close coach doors as violently as possible. Although not required to, many passengers imitate the trainmen. With them it is a desire to make a noise in the world. If a man cannot attract attention in the arts and the professions, a sure way is to bang doors behind him.

DOXOLOGY

Praise Hearst, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Hearst, who runs things here below.
Praise them who make him manifest —
Praise Andy L. and all the rest.

Praise Hearst because the world is round,
Because the seas with salt abound,
Because the water's always wet,
And constellations rise and set.

Praise Hearst because the grass is green,
And pleasant flow'rs in spring are seen;
Praise him for morning, night and noon.
Praise him for stars and sun and moon.

Praise Hearst, our nation's aim and end,
Humanity's unselfish friend;
And who remains, for all our debt,
A modest sweet white violet.

We like Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, Kubla Khan, and many other unfinished things, but we have always let unfinished novels alone – unless you consider unfinished the yarn that “Q” finished for Stevenson. And so we are unable to appreciate the periodical eruptions of excitement over “The Mystery of Edwin Drood.” Were we to read it, we dessay we should be as nutty as the Dickens fans.

Mr. Basso, second violin in the Minneapolis Orchestra, would seem to have missed his vocation by a few seats.

MY DEAR, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN FRED!

[From the Milwaukee Sentinel.]

In this one, the orchestra became a troupe of gayly appareled ballerinas, whirling in splendid abandon, with Mr. Stock as première.

One lamps by the advertisements that the Fokines are to dance Beethoven's “Moonshine” sonata. The hootch-kootch, as it were.

OFT IN THE STILLY WISCONSIN NIGHT

Sir: California may have the most sunshine, but I'll bet Wisconsin has the most moonshine.
E. C. M.

Did ever a presidential candidate say a few kind words for art and literature, intimate the part they play in the civilizing of a nation, and promise to further them by all means in his power, that the people should not sink deeper into the quagmire of materialism? Probably not.

“Hercules, when only a baby, strangled two servants,” according to a bright history student. Nobody thought much about it in those days, as there were plenty to be had.

Absolute zero in entertainment has been achieved. A young woman recited or declaimed the imperishable Eighteenth Amendment in an Evanston church.

With Jedge Landis at the head of grand baseball and Mary Garden at the head of grand opera, the future of the greatest outdoor and indoor sports is temporarily assured.

Rome toddled before its fall.

The Delectable River

I. – DOCTOR MAYHEW’S SHOP

Stibbs the Grocer zigzagged like a dragon-fly about his crowded store. Within the hour the supplies for our woodland cruise were packed in boxes and tagged, and ready for transportation. It was a brisk transaction; for Stibbs it was only one incident in a busy day. Outside the trolley clanged, and a Saturday crowd footed the main street of the Canadian city by the falls of the Saint Mary. It was hard to realize that solitude and a primal hush were only a few hours away.

I contrasted the activity in the store of Stibbs with the drowse that hung over another shop in the North Country where, in earlier years, I used to buy my supplies. Doctor Mayhew kept the shop, which flourished until a pushing Scandinavian set up a more pretentious establishment; after which the Doctor’s shop faded away like the grin of Puss of Cheshire. One could not buy groceries of the Doctor in a hurry; one had no wish to. I always allowed the forenoon, as there was much foreign gossip to exchange between items, and the world’s doings to be discussed. The Doctor was interested in the remotest subjects. The pestilences of the Orient and the possibility of their spreading to our shores, and eventually to the North Country, gave him much concern; the court life at St. James’s and the politics of Persia absorbed him; – local matters interested him not at all.

“Ten pounds of flour?” ... The Doctor would pause, scoop in hand; then, abruptly reminded of a bit of unfinished business at the warehouse, he would leave the flour trembling in the balance and shuffle off, while I perched on the counter and swung my heels, and discussed packs with Ted Wakeland, another pioneer, who, spitting vigorously, averred that packing grub through the brush was all right for an Indian, but no fit task for a white man. Through the open door I could see the gentle swells of the Big Water washing along the crescent of the beach and heaping the sand in curious little crescent ridges. The sun beat hotly on the board walk. There were faint sounds in the distance, from the Indian village up the shore and the fishing community across the bay. Life in this parish of the Northland drifted by like the fleece of summer’s sky.

“And three pounds of rice?”

The Doctor was back at the scales, and the weighing proceeded in leisurely and dignified fashion. Haste, truly, were unseemly. But at last the supplies were stowed in the brown pack, there were handshakings all round, and a word of advice from old heads, and I marched away with a singing heart.

Outfitting in the Doctor’s shop was an event, a ceremonial, a thing to be housed in memory along with camps and trails.

II. – THE RIVER

He who has known many rivers knows that every watercourse has an individuality, which is no more to be analyzed than the personality of one’s dearest friend. Two rivers may flow almost side by side for a hundred miles, separated only by a range of hills, and resemble each other no more than two women. You may admire the one, and grant it beauty and charm; but you will love the other, and dream of it, and desire infinite acquaintance of it.

These differences are too subtle for definition. Superficially, two rivers in the North Country are unlike only in this respect, that one has cut a deep valley through the hills and flows swiftly and shallowly to its sea, and the other has kept to the plateaus and drops leisurely by a series of cascades and short rapids, separated by long reaches of deep water. Otherwise their physical aspects coincide.

The banks of archaic rock are covered with a thin soil which maintains so dense a tangle that the axe must clear a space for the smallest camp; their overhanging borders are of cedar and alder and puckerbush and osier; their waters are slightly colored by the juices of the swampland; following lines of minimum resistance, they twist gently or sharply every little way, and always to the voyager's delight, for the eye is unprepared for a beautiful vista, as the ear for a sudden and exquisite modulation in music.

So winds the Delectable River —

“through hollow lands and hilly lands” —

idly where the vale spreads out, quickly where the hills close in; black and mysterious in the deep places, frank and golden in the shoal. In one romantic open, where the stream flows thinly over a long stretch of sand, the bed is of an almost luminous amber, as if its particles had imprisoned a little of the sunlight that had fallen on them through the unnumbered years.

The River was somewhat low when I dipped paddle in it, and the ooze at the marge was a continuous chronicle of woodland life. Moose and deer, bear and beaver, mink and fisher, all the creatures of the wild had contributed to the narrative. Even the water had its tale: a line of bubbles would show that a large animal, likely a moose, had crossed a few minutes before our canoes rounded the bend. There were glimpses of less wary game: ducks and herons set sail at the last moment, and partridges, perching close at hand, cocked their foolish heads as we went by; two otters sported on a bit of beach; trout leaped every rod of the way.

And never a sign of man or mark of man's destructiveness; nor axe nor fire had harmed a single tree. A journey of unmarred delight through a valley of unending green.

III. – SMUDGE

“This,” you say, as you step from the canoe and help to fling the cargo ashore, “this looks like good camping ground.”

The place is more open than is usual, comparatively level, and a dozen feet above the river, which, brawling over a ledge, spreads into an attractive pool. The place also faces the west, where there is promise of a fine sunset; a number of large birches are in sight, and an abundance of balsam. “And,” you remark, stooping to untie the tent-bag, “there are not many flies.”

Instantly a mosquito sings in your ear, and as you still his song you recall a recent statement by the scientist Klein, that an insect's wings flap four hundred times in a second. The mind does not readily grasp so rapid a motion, but you accept the figures on trust, as you accept the distances of interstellar spaces.

Very soon you discover that you were in error about the fewness of the flies. They are all there – mosquitoes, black-flies, deer-flies, and punkies, besides other species strictly vegetarian. So you drop the tent-bag and build a smudge. Experience has taught you to make a small but hot fire, and when this is well under way you kick open a rotted, moss-grown cedar and scoop up handfuls of damp mould. This, piled on and banked around the fire, provides a smudge that is continuous and effective. We built smudges morning, noon, and night. Whenever a halt was called, if only for five minutes, I reached mechanically for a strip of birchbark and a handful of twigs. At one camping place the ring of smudges suggested the magic fire circle in “Die Walküre.” Brunhilde lay in her tent, in a reek of smoke, while Wotan, in no humor for song, heaped vegetable tinder upon the defending fires. More than once the darkening forest and the steel-gray sky of a Canadian twilight have set me humming the motives of “The Ring,” and I shall always remember a pretty picture in an earlier cruise. “Jess” was a stable boy who drove our team to the point where roads ceased, and during a halt in the expedition this exuberant youth reclined upon a log, and with a pipe fashioned from a reed

sought to imitate responsively the song of the white-throated sparrow. He looked for all the world like Siegfried in his forest.

“Smudge.” It is not a poetic word – mere mention of it would distress Mr. Yeats; but it is potent as “Sesame” to unlock the treasures of memory. And before the laggard Spring comes round again many of us will sigh for a whiff of yellow, acrid smoke, curling from a smoldering fire in the heart of the enchanted wood.

IV. – “BOGWAH.”

We have been paddling for more than an hour, through dark and slowly moving water. Two or three hundred yards has been the limit of the view ahead, as the stream swerves gracefully from the slightest rise of land, and flows now east, now north, now east, now south again. So long a stretch of navigable water is not common on the Delectable River, and we make the most of it, moving leisurely, and prisoning the everchanging picture with the imperfect camera of the eyes. Presently a too-familiar sound is heard above the dipping of the paddles, and the Indian at the stern announces, “Bogwah!” – which word in the tongue of the Chippewa signifies a shallow. And as we round the next bend we see the swifter water, the rocks in midstream, and the gently slanting line of treetops.

“Bogwah” spells work – dragging canoes over sandy and pebbly river-bottom, or unloading and carrying around the foam of perilous rapids. For compensation there is the pleasure of splashing ankle-deep and deeper in the cool current, and casting for trout in the “laughing shallow,” which I much prefer to the “dreaming pool.” They who choose it may fish from boat or ledge: for me, to wade and cast is the poetry of angling.

Assured that the “bogwah” before us extends for half a mile or more, we decide for luncheon, and the canoes are beached on an island, submerged in springtime, but at low water a heap of yellow sands. And I wish I might reconstruct for you the picture which memory too faintly outlines. Mere words will not do it, and yet one is impelled to try. “All literature,” says Mr. Arnold Bennett, in one of his stimulating essays, “is the expression of feeling, of passion, of emotion, caused by a sensation of the interestingness of life. What drives a historian to write history? Nothing but the overwhelming impression forced upon him by the survey of past times. He is forced into an attempt to reconstitute the picture for others.”

And so you are to imagine a marshy, brushy open, circular in shape, from which the hills and forest recede for a considerable distance, and into which a lazy brook comes to merge with the Delectable River; a place to which the moose travel in great numbers, as hoofmarks and cropped vegetation bear witness; a wild place, that must be wonderful in mist and moonlight. Now it is drenched with sunrays from a vaporless sky, and the white-throat is singing all around us – not the usual three sets of three notes, but seven triplets. Elsewhere on the River, days apart, I heard that prolonged melody, and although I have looked in the bird books for record of so sustained a song, I have not found it.

V. – FINE FEATHERS

There is a certain school of anglers that go about the business of fishing with much gravity. You should hear the Great Neal discourse of their profundities. Lacking that privilege, you may conceive a pair of these anglers met beside a river, seeking to discover which of the many insects flying about is preferred by the trout on that particular morning. There is disagreement, or there is lack of evidence. It is decided to catch a trout, eviscerate him, and obtain internal and indisputable evidence. For the cast any fly is used, and when the trout is opened it is learned that he has been feeding on a small black insect; whereupon our anglers tie a number of flies to resemble that insect, and proceed solemnly with their day’s work. Though the trout scorn their fine feathers, they will not fish with any fly.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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