

POETRY WITH A POINT.

You can lead a horse to water,
But you can't make him drink;
You can send a fool to college,

THE LINEN CLOSET.

"But surely there are more rooms?"
The young widow who had come
down to Garland to hire a little house

"Only four rooms?" she said.
"Surely there were ten originally,
ma'am," the agent replied.

"There were ten, but the rest are boarded up.
This is simply the wing, but you have
a parlor, a dining-room and two bedrooms

"You know the house?" cried the agent.
"Of, in houses of this sort you always
find a black marble mantel and a wainscot,"

"The ghost always comes out of that," said the agent.
"Of, ho!" cried the lady. "The cat
is out of the bag. The house is haunted?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied the agent.
"It has that reputation among ignorant
people. But since the main building

"The figure?" asked the lady. "All in white like an ironing-board?"
"Al in white, but like a pretty girl
of sixteen," replied the agent.

"I remember the murder myself. My father
was in the real-estate business
where I am now. I was a school boy.

"Very sensible to send the child away,"
the agent said. "Well, the facts were these:
Martha Penny lived as seamstress with Mrs. Parker.

"My God!" he panted. "Do I see you again, Martha?"
"I am Martha Penny," replied the widow, in a soft whisper.

"To ask your forgiveness," the man replied.
"Without it I am lost in this world and the next.

"When I fell," the faint voice whispered,
"when the blood gushed from the wound
you gave me I believed that you had shot me purposefully.

"But now?" said Jack.
"Oh, unhappy man," replied the spirit,
"night after night I have heard your moans;

"Jack," it said in more earthly tones,
"I am so glad that you did not mean to kill me.

"He's an altered man, ma'am," said the agent.
"I'll take the house, Mr. Brick," said the widow,

"And my servant and I and little Tom will move in on Monday."
They did so, and soon flowers bloomed in the garden and at the window,

"The mother, reclining in her Mexican hammock, read or crocheted,
or walked with her boy by the day grew cool.

her Mexican hammock, read or crocheted,
or walked with her boy by the day grew cool.
The maid was pretty and alert.

But that Mrs. Smith told the truth,
she did not tell the whole truth.
Sometimes at night—yes, midnight—

When the little Tom and the maid were sound asleep,
the lady wrapped in a double gown and with woolen slippers

slippers on her feet, would glide out into the hall,
and there, with her ear to the light partition

that divided the wing from the main building,
would listen to feet that went to and fro,
to wails and moans, to what seemed to be a prayer,

And to many repetitions of the name, "Martha Penny—Martha Penny,"
but oftentimes "Martha" alone.
She never spoke of this to any one,

and it was plain that she felt no terror,
but sometimes she wept bitterly,
as if she was very sorry for the poor, wandering ghost.

This went on for months, until one night Mrs. Smith did a strange thing.
She arose in the middle of the night

and let down the great coil of her brown hair,
and braided it in one braid and tied it with white ribbon.
She dressed herself all in white

and over her head threw a square of tulle.
Then she left her house, taking a lantern with her,
and stole toward a side door

of the main building and tried a key in the lock and entered.
The place was dry with dust,
and dust rolled beneath her feet

as she climbed the stairs, and spiders crawled along the balustrades and up the walls.
She passed the big chamber and the little chamber,
and stopped at the linen closet.

Opening the door, she saw piles of clothes and sheets and towels,
and pillow cases, once white, but now powdered gray as though a snow of that hue had fallen on them.

She lowered her lantern and beheld across the sill a stain of blood,
and within, on the floor, a deeper one;
but she did not shudder.
Indeed, a smile crossed her face—a pitiful, tender smile.

"Poor little Martha Penny!" she said,
and, without a quiver or a cry, she entered in and shut the door behind her.

A small, round window, high up in the wall, let in a little gleam of moonlight,
a broken pane admitted a breath of air;
but amid the woolen blankets at the further end moths burrowed.

She could see their tracks, and a curious smell that lingers in moth-eaten wool made the air heavy.
Already her lantern's light attracted insects that came through the broken pane above to flutter about it.

She closed the slide, and now looked like a very ghost, itself all white in the faint moonlight.
She listened intently.
Soon she heard the sound of a door closed carefully,
feet upon the stairs, feet in the passage without the door.

Some one began to pace slowly up and down.
"Martha!" said a voice; "Martha!"
Then there was silence.
Then again, "Martha, Martha!"

It was a man's voice which spoke.
Now it went on: "They say your ghost haunts this house.
I have come here so often and heard nothing, seen nothing,
Martha, give me some sign that you hear me."

The widow lifted her hand and tapped lightly on the door.
"There was a little cry without, then 'Martha' came again, and now the widow spoke.

"You call Martha, She hears. For once, and once only, she is permitted to listen to you.
Who are you?" "The man who loved you—Jack Parker," replied the voice.
"May I see you Martha—angel Martha—may I see you?"

"If you swear not to move—not to try to touch me," said the widow.
"I swear," replied Jack, in a choking voice.
The door of the linen closet moved slowly.
The man on his knees in the passage without saw a white draped figure with long braids of hair hanging below its waist.

"No, Jack, no, you are quite sane, quite sane.
Remember how the body of poor Martha Penny was spirited away.
Have you never thought that perhaps she was not dead,
though that stupid old doctor, in his dotage,

declared her so? Jack, poor Jack, she was alive.
But when she came to herself she felt that you should murder her very great.
And yet she did not wish to give any evidence that would send you to prison.

She resolved to fly. The old negro helped her away, and lied to cover the act.
Jack, I am no ghost, I am alive, I am flesh and blood.
Touch my hand, I give you leave.
Poor Jack, poor fellow, how you have suffered all these years.

"As they suffer in Hades," he said, and humbly put his lips to the hem of her robe.
"I worked hard for awhile, then a good old man married me," she went on.
"His was kind as a father, and I have a little boy.
I am a widow now, and I came back to see the old place.

I live in the wing that the agent had to let,
and night after night I hear you through the partition,
weeping and praying forgiveness of my ghost,
swearing you did not mean to harm me.
And I meant that you should only think my ghost forgiving you.

But I—I could not help telling the truth, dear Jack, once I saw you so near me and so broken hearted."
Then indeed, Jack grew bolder and dared to touch her hands and to lift them to his lips.
He was thankful and humble, as though heaven had vouchsafed him a vision of angels,
and he left her at her door as he might have parted from one.
But, after all, she was a living woman, he a man who loved her,
and ere the autumn leaves fell they were wed.—Mary Kyle Dallas, in Fireside Companion.

HIS MISTAKE.

The Old Man Got Slightly Mixed up on the Coats.

An old man with a florid face sat in a restaurant the other day talking business with another diner across the table, says the New York Tribune.

His coat was hanging on the wall beside him, and he was so earnestly engaged in conversation that when the meal was ended and he was ready to smoke he reached up his hand without looking around and began to feel for the pocket of his overcoat.

His hand reached impatiently all over the garment, found the pocket, and went down into it and came forth empty.
Then the old man searched for the other pocket. This was on the other side of the coat, next to the wall, and it took his straying hand some time to get into it.
A look of surprise flashed over his face.

He drew forth from his pocket a box of cigarettes.
He put them down on the table and looked at them contentedly.
"Cigarettes," he said, with a sniff. "Cigarettes. Somebody has stolen my cigar-case and left these things in my pocket."

"The old man began to get angry and his face grew redder.
"Cigarettes," he snorted. "The scoundrel! Waiter, waiter," he called his voice rising in anger.
"Who put these things in my pocket and stole my cigars?"

"I don't know, sir. I'll see about it, sir."
"You should know, you do know."
"Let me look in your pockets, sir; you may be mistaken."
"Don't contradict me. I tell you they're stolen, and some one has put these—things in my pocket."

"Let me look in your pocket again, sir. They may be there."
"You shan't look in my pocket. Don't you think I know what's in my pockets and what isn't? Didn't I just go through them? What does this house mean," cried the old man, standing up and snatching his finger threateningly; "by allowing a guest to be treated in this fashion? I'll have you reported, sir. I'll have you discharged."
He pushed the box of cigarettes angrily across the table.

"Bring me some cigars," he snapped.
As the old gentleman was lighting his cigar another man came up and peached for the coat which was hanging on the peg beside the indignant guest.
He got a fierce glance as he took down the coat. The old man got up, his face purple with rage.

"What are you going to do with that coat, sir?" he asked crisply.
"Put it on," answered the other calmly, handing it to a waiter.
"That is my coat, sir."
"Is it beg your pardon, it is my coat," replied the stranger, only, slipping his arms through the sleeves.

The old man was in a tremble.
"The old man was in a tremble.
That is my coat," he shouted.
"Take it off."
The stranger's eye caught sight of the box of cigarettes lying on the table.

"Ah," he said, "I see you have been trying the flavor of my cigarettes. Won't you have another?" he added, smiling.
"Where are my cigars?" cried the furious gentleman.
"I'm sure I don't know," said the stranger quietly. "Perhaps they are in my pocket here. I see the coats are precisely alike. I noticed that when I hung mine beside yours."

The old man looked at his coat undisturbed on its peg.
"Have a cigar?" he said faintly.
"No, I thank you. I prefer cigarettes."
"Have a drink?"
"No, I thank you, I seldom drink."

"Hang it, waiter!" cried the old gentleman, "bring me my check. Are you going to keep me here all day?"
"Good day, sir," said the stranger.
"Good day," growled the irascible old gentleman.
A moment later the stranger returned.

"Excuse me, sir," he said mildly, "may I have one of my cigarettes?"
Just then the old gentleman swore roundly.

Mistakes Will Happen.

In the rush and hurry of putting together a newspaper mistakes occur far less frequently than might reasonably be expected, but once in a while something comes up to show what is only prevented daily by the closest care.

Here, for instance is the Boston Herald, a paper that is usually carefully made up, describing a man as follows:—
The doctor is a man who would attract attention in any crowd.

He is over 6 feet tall, straight and broad-shouldered. He looks to be about 55 years old. His most prominent feature is his nose, which was enormous, and the conduct of the women execrable and scandalous.

Then on another page of the same paper we read:—
There was a perfect mob of people, principally women and young girls, strangers to the dead and to the family, but who crushed into the house to get a sight at the furnishings upon which money had been lavished without stint.

The crown is large and sharply aquiline. His eyes are blue and penetrating and his beard, which is sprinkled with gray, is worn Burnside fashion and rather long. He is a very smooth and easy talker.

Let anybody read these two paragraphs carefully, and he will be pretty sure to read them again and gasp as he does it.—Hartford Courant.

Shaving With Both Hands.

There are lots of barbers who won't hire a man who can't shave himself with either hand. Of the people who shave themselves, forty-nine out of fifty can hold their razors in but one hand.

Yet it is just as easy and much more convenient to shave the right side of your face with your right hand and the left side with the left hand if you only begin that way. No two men who shave themselves, do the work alike, especially if they took it up before going to a barber.

I know a wealthy man who shaves himself standing in the corner of his room and facing the wall. In youth he was a poor country boy, and like most boys, bought a razor on the quiet.

But he had no looking-glass in his chamber, and rather than let his folks know what he was up to, he faced the wall and scraped away by sense of feeling. Once learned that way, he never had use for a glass.

I knew an old farmer in the country who shaved himself sitting on a milking-stool, and looking at his reflection in a bucket of water. That was the way he learned when a boy, and he said he couldn't shave himself standing up.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Kate Could Not Eat the Salad.

Kate Chase Sprague tells this story of a visit to old Gen. Winfield Scott, at Cozen's West Point. "He gave us seats at his own especial table, and was very kind to us, but I was terribly afraid of him. One of his greatest pleasures at the table was to mix the most fiery of salads, which he would send by his own man (who always stood behind his master's chair) to the favored few.

My gastronomic tastes were far from being developed, and the old gentleman's red pepper and mustard nearly killed me. I simply could not eat the burning stuff. Feeling the general's eye upon me, I vainly tried to swallow it, but failed ignominiously, with tears coming into my eyes with the effort.

To add to my discomfort and mortification, a voice roared out in a deep tone from the general's throne: "The little Chase does not like my salad."

A Romance of the Census.

"Madam," said the grateful census enumerator, "you have replied courteously and kindly to all my questions. Unlike nearly every person I have met since I began this work, you have not treated me as if I were an enemy and an intruder. You have answered satisfactorily all the questions as to age, physical condition and ownership of property. Your conduct meets my hearty approval not only as a Government officer, but as a citizen, and with your permission I will ask you a question not down in my list.

"Are you engaged to be married to anybody?" "I am, sir," replied the handsome widow, blushing.
"I feared so," said the census taker, with a sigh. And he put on his hat and went out into the cold world again, his faith in human nature restored, but his heart broken.—Exchange.

Self-Identifying Offspring.

There is a negro woman living out in the country near Waynesboro, Ga., who has queer ideas as to the naming of children. Instead of bestowing upon them the Biblical names so popular with the Afro-American citizen, she has developed a nomenclature from their physical peculiarities.

For instance, one has very thick lips, and his name is Lips; another has very other is blessed with a pair of bowed legs, and he is known as Crooks. She gives as a reason that as there are so many of them she could not remember the ordinary names, but as they are, she has only to look at them and she knows what to call them.—Atlanta Constitution.

Electricity is employed in a Berlin cafe to boil coffee. A platinum wire passes in spiral form through several glass jars, the electrical current quickly raising the water contained to a boiling point, and the coffee is thus prepared in the view of any one in the room.

A small electric railway conveys the coffee to the several tables, so that the guests may help themselves to their liking.

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