



Whether Common or Not

By Will H. Murray.

Off to School

We haven't any "little girl"—
With eyes alight with glee,
And hair in many a dancing curl,
Her happy heart care free,
She started off to school today
And mamma's heart is sore;
"Our baby's gone," I heard her say;
"Our little girl no more."

We lost our little girl today.
With eager, hurrying feet
She sped with laughter light and gay
Along the busy street.
And watching her a mother's eyes
Grew moist with unshed tears
As backward now her mem'ry flies
Through quickly vanished years.

We lost our little girl today.
With lightly tripping feet
She hurries on her schoolward way
Far down the city street.
But though the years speed swiftly by
Into eternity,
She'll be, however fast they fly,
"My little girl" to me.

Modern Definitions

- Community of Interests—Society language for the old saw, "There is honor among thieves."
- Vested Rights—Legally authorized to infringe upon the rights of others.
- Memory—A convenient thing to fall back from when asked, "How did you get it?"
- Senatorial Dignity—Something to bring out when questioned too closely.
- Congress—A large body of men surrounded by selfish influences.
- Blackmailer—A Mann-ly art.
- Judicial Dignity—A fortress in which to temporarily hide judicial incompetency.
- Financier—Sometimes used as a synonym for paresis.
- Octopus—No. 26 Wall street.
- Sweat shop—A hot house for growing bargain counter sales.

That Corn Problem

A reader of The Commoner writes that there are always an even number of rows of kernels on a cob because nature ordained it, and offers as proof that nature works in pairs; that man has two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet, etc. He forgets, however, that man has only one nose, one mouth, and one heart. He also forgets that man has an odd number of digits on each hand and foot. He further asserts that nature never makes mistakes. But people have been born blind, with one arm or no arms, and that nature often indulges in some remarkable freaks. There is a natural mathematical reason why the rows of kernels on a cob are always even, and of the scores of answers sent in not one has gone to the real essence of the matter.

Women and Chess

An exchange expresses wonder that the feminine gender has never produced a great chess player. Come to think of it, there is something strange about that. All the great chess players have been men. For that matter, so have all the great billiard players. To become proficient in either of these games one must have plenty of time for practice, and surely the women have plenty of time. All they have to do in the morning when they get up is to start the kitchen fire, get breakfast, prepare the children for school, wash the dishes, sweep the house, get the things ready for dinner so the children can hurry back to school, wash the dinner dishes,

darn a lot of stockings, put on a lot of patches, make the beds, scrub the kitchen, iron a lot of clothes, get the washing ready for an early start next morning, peel the potatoes for supper, make biscuits, get supper, wash the dishes, get the children ready for bed and then do some more darning and patching. With just this little amount of work to do it seems a wonder that more women have not developed into expert chess or billiard players.

It must be that there is something about these two games that appeals only to the male mind.

The Difference

The smiling financier merely turned in the witness chair and refused to obey the court's command to answer the question.

"I refuse to answer by advice of counsel," he said.

"The court insists that you answer."

Silence having reigned five consecutive minutes the court adjourned. But immediately after the court convened again the laboring man who had struck for shorter hours and better wages was haled before that same judge.

"You have violated the injunction issued from this bench!" thundered the judge. "I—"

"Your honor, I plead not guilty," replied the prisoner. "I have faithfully obeyed the court's order and I have not—"

"That is enough from you, sir," ejaculated the judge. "You are fined \$100 and sentenced to jail for thirty days. The orders of this court must be obeyed."

Having signed the commitment papers the judge sent a polite little note to the financier saying that he was within his constitutional rights when he refused to answer, and assuring him that the court would protect him from further indignities.

In the meantime the workingman was in jail.

A Lessons in Morals

"Look here, son!" exclaimed the angry parent. "I hear you were betting on the races yesterday."

"Well, father, I only put up a few dollars that Flyaway would win."

"Haven't I told you it was wicked to gamble? Haven't I warned you against it? If I ever hear of your doing such a thing again I will thrash you good. Now you take this note down to Broker & Seller's office, and hurry up about it. I think this remarkably open winter is going to hurt the wheat crop and I want to buy a few thousand bushels on margins. And don't you loiter on the way, either."

Just Thoughts

The other day one of the old-time "tramp printers" wandered into the palatial quarters presided over by the architect of this department, and for an hour or two architect and tourist indulged in reminiscences of the old days before the typesetting machines came in and made such radical changes in the printing business.

The tourist recalled old times when he and the architect worked at the case-wherever fancy dictated, and the whereabouts of Dixie Dunbar, Colonel Busby, "Red" Hill and a score or more of old-timers guessed at. And then, after the tourist had taken his departure, the architect sat for a while ruminating on the things that were and the things that are.

The change in the printing trade

brought about by the Mergenthaler machine has been little short of marvelous. Twenty years ago the printers of America were the greatest itinerants known, and the term "tramp printer" was as common as fleas on a dog. These men drifted from one section of the country to the other, usually going south in the winter and north in the summer. They could always get enough work to keep them from going hungry, generally made enough to satisfy their thirst, and were a happy-go-lucky class. Some of the biggest-hearted men the writer has ever met were those old-time tourists—always ready to divide their last dime with a brother printer, and standing by him through thick and thin in times of trouble. Their work and their itinerant natures made them a convivial class, and as a result the whole trade soon came to be known as one inclined to dissipation. This, of course, was a gross libel, for a big majority of printers are and always have been, sober mechanics. The ones who habitually squandered their earnings in drink made so much noise and were so "previous" that people made the mistake of thinking they were in a majority. It was just the mistake the Arkansas man made who wired to a St. Louis commission house to know what it would pay him per dozen for frogs' legs. "A dollar a dozen, how many dozen can you furnish?" replied the house. "Can furnish them by the million," replied the Arkansas man. A week later the Arkansas man shipped in three dozen and accompanied them with a letter saying: "This is all I could find. I was fooled by the noise they made."

Those were the old hand composition days, and it was common to see from twenty-five to one hundred men working on the case in a city daily office on a Saturday night. Then a man was supposed to set about 8,000 "ems"—the printer's standard of measurement. But if he was just recovering from a little bout with John Barleycorn and did not make over 4,000 or 4,500 it did not matter very much. But it is different now. Ten men working at machines have to set as much type as fifty men did in the old hand days, and if one machine man is "off his feed" it means that the paper is "stuck" and misses the early mails. Therefore the dissipated man does not last long these days. As a result the old-time "tourist" has about disappeared and the printers are today relieved from the odium that once attached to the craft. It is a nerve-racking job to run a linotype machine and a man must have the possession of all his mental and physical faculties if he "makes good."

The benefits of thorough trades organization were never better shown than when the printers were confronted with the typesetting machine. The writer remembers well the time when he and other journeymen printers used to stand around after "30" was off the hook and laugh at the idea that a machine could ever be built to set type. "When they can build a machine that can think they'll have a machine that can set type," was a common expression in the craft. And while we were deceiving ourselves with this idea Otto Mergenthaler was working away on his wonderful invention. Suddenly it was thrown on the market—a machine that not only set type but actually made it possible for one man to set as much type as five men could by hand. It was enough to disrupt almost any trades union, but the printers met it more than half way. Instead of fighting it they accepted it, conformed themselves to the new conditions, and today the "iron man" is the most tractable individual in the world. In the old hand days a man had to work two hours in the afternoon "filling his case," and then set type by hand eight hours at night in order to make \$3.00 or \$3.25, ten to eleven hours a day. Now he works

eight hours and makes more money. Instead of injuring the printing business from the employee's standpoint the machine has been a benefit. And above all it has worked a marvelous change in the morale of the craft. The men who were threatened with trade extinction by the introduction of the machine were speedily taken care of by the increased production of newspapers, magazines and other products of the press.

But the machine put the "tourist" out of business. If he was too thoroughly imbued with the itinerant spirit to settle down he was forced out of the trade. If not, he settled down, learned the machine, or went from the news room to the ad or job room, and is today a sober, industrious and respected mechanic.

All these wonderful changes have occurred in the short space of sixteen years. But after the old "tourist" had wandered forth to again take up his weary way, the writer spent an hour of pleasant recollections of the old days, the old ways and the old

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