

At the Modern Opera.
Patience—"You say you heard Mme. Highsee in vaudeville today?" Patrice—"Yes; first time she's been heard in this country." Patience—"Nonsense! She sang in this country in opera for two years." Patrice—"Yes, she was in opera, but everybody talks at the opera, and nobody heard her."

Those Happy Days.
"Remember the eyes of the nation are on you," exclaimed the constituent. "I know it," replied Senator Sorghum. "And the nation's getting more acutely discerning every day. The time is gone when a man can assume an impressive pose and get by as an optical illusion."—Washington Star.

His Verdict.
At the meeting of the Afro-American Debating club the question of capital punishment for murder occupied the attention of the orators for the evening. One speaker had a great deal to say about the sanity of persons who thus took the law into their own hands. The last speaker however, after a stirring harangue, concluded with great feeling: "Ah disagrees with capital punishment and all disheath talk 'bout sanity. Any pusion 'at c'mits murder ain't in a sanitary condition."

Different Proposition.
"But, surely, Bunkum," said the white man, "you are not afraid of that old dog? Why, he eats right out of my hand!" "Yassah! Yassah! When he eats out o' yo' hand, it's yo' hand; but when he done takes a fool notion to eat out o' muh leg, it's muh leg, sah!"—Kansas City Star.

The Still Small Voice.
The most potent and beneficent forces are stillest. The strength of a sentence is not in its adjectives, but in its verbs and nouns, and the strength of men and nations is in their calm, sane, meditative moments. In a time of noise and hurry and materialism like ours, the gospel of the still and small voice is always seasonable. —John Burroughs, in the Atlantic.

Evil in Excess of Fat.
Excess of fat affects the heart by putting an extra burden upon it; it augments the labor of the muscles of breathing, the diaphragm in particular; it interferes with the vital functions of the liver and other internal organs, and by filling the intermuscular spaces it compresses the muscle fibers, causing atrophy and degeneration. This results in constant weakness, slow activity, lassitude, early exhaustion.

Noted the Resemblance.
The little boy while playing out in the yard came upon an old paint-spattered hat and at that moment happened to see a painter working on a barn not far distant. Going up to him, he said, "Here's your hat, Mister." Upon being told that the hat did not belong to him he looked at the painter, then at the hat, and finally said, "Well, it looks like you."

Judges and Juries.
The judge pronounces the law in the case, the jury looks after, and acts upon, the facts. The verdict of the jury is supposed to be a conclusion from the facts. If it should happen to be a flagrant disregard of the facts, the judge may (and sometimes does) rebuke the jury. He may even go so far as to order a new trial of the case.

Masculine and Feminine Sins.
Hardly any priest, hardly any physician, would agree that women are better morally than men. There are some kinds of sin which men commit more readily than women. Such are the sins of lust, and possibly those of anger. But there are others where men and women seem to offend about equally, the sins of gluttony, sloth, and covetousness. And of the sins of pride and envy, one might call them pre-eminently feminine sins.—Bernard J. Bell, in the Atlantic.

Nature's Workings.
How plants absorb nitrogen from the soil is utterly unknown. No animal must get the large quantities of nitrogen that are necessary to it by using plants for food. When the animal or the plant dies the constituents of its body are returned to the earth, where the bacteria of putrefaction break up the elaborate organic chemical compounds upon which the plants again can feed.

Perplexity.
A servant girl who had been admonished by her mistress to be very careful in "washing up" the best tea things, was overheard shortly afterward indulging in the following soliloquy while in the act of wiping the sugar basin: "If I was to drop this 'ere basin and was to catch it, I suppose I shouldn't catch it; but if I was to drop it and wasn't to catch it, I reckon I should just catch it."

Easy to Radiate Happiness.
It is astonishing how much one without money may give—a kind word, a helping hand—the warm sympathy that rejoices with those who rejoice and weeps with those who weep. No man is so poor, no woman is so poor, as not to be able to contribute largely to the happiness of those around them.—Anon.

Would Give Money for It.
A man took his wife to a doctor, who put a thermometer into her mouth and told her to keep her mouth shut for two or three minutes. When departing the man tapped the doctor on the shoulder and said: "Doctor, what will you take for that thing? I never saw my wife keep her mouth shut so long before."

Self-Torture.
We pity the misguided devotees who put stones in their shoes for a pilgrimage, or who walk over thorny paths to "make merit," but many of us have days when we walk our life road in much the same way, and with no such worthy end in view. We translate the careless speech into intentional offense, the little neglect into deliberate unkindness, the common duty into hardship, and press them in upon our hearts until the whole spirit is sore and bruised self-torture.

Poor Coffee in Java.
It is said that nowhere in the world is coffee, the drink, worse than in Java, where coffee, the bean, is supposed to be at its very best. Japanese distill coffee essence of extreme strength, bottle it, and pour a few drops into a cup of hot water when they wish refreshment.

FREEDOM

By CATHERINE CRANMAR.

Mary Hanson turned her face toward the wall and shielded her eyes with bent arm that she might take her extra Sunday morning nap, and in the jumbled dream which followed she seemed to be toiling alone up a long hill at the top of which she rested under a shady tree and was joined by the tall man who lived next door.

Then suddenly into her dream came the magnetic voice of the man with whom she had held daily business telephone conversations for two years, but had never seen.

That afternoon when Mary went to her room after the midday dinner she again felt the loneliness of her lot.

Through the open window there came to her the wondrously clear song of a bird. It brought Mary to the window to see what the singer looked like. Perched on the topmost branch of the big tree in the yard next door was a tiny yellow canary, intoxicated with the joy of being released temporarily from its cage, which a maid was placing conspicuously on the fence back of the large apartment directly across the alley from Mary's boarding house.

The man next door sat as usual under the tree with a book, and as she saw him, Mary remembered her dream. The song of the bird seemed to penetrate his thoughtful mood, and he half closed his book and looked aloft until he located the songster.

Although Mary still held a book in her hand, she read little, for the song of the bird kept coming to her and with it the memory of the sympathetic smile of her neighbor. Her occasional surreptitious peeps showed the man apparently absorbed in his book, although if she could have faced him directly, she would have found that his eyes were dreamily gazing at nothing at all.

The maid and the child reappeared and began to whistle to the canary to lure it back to its cage, but the singing speck of yellow flitted from limb to limb without condescending to notice their poor imitation of its song.

Suddenly it came so near to Mary's window that she looked out and saw it perched on the tall lilac bushes at the corner of the back porch. The maid saw her, and asked permission to bring the cage into the yard. Mary bade her come, and, without thinking of the proximity of the man next door, went below to try to help capture the fugitive.

When the maid approached the lilac bushes with the cage, the tiny bird tucked its black-eyed head to one side, eyed her saucily until she was almost near enough to reach it, and, with pert little chirps to emphasize each move, he went from branch to branch until it reached the top of the shrubbery, from which he flew across the fence to the upper branches of the big tree next door.

The man next door put down his book and rose. He spoke to the maid just as Mary was consoling the weeping child, who thought her pet had got permanently beyond reach. When she raised her head the man was whistling to the bird in notes wonderfully like its own. The little yellow songster peeped down from its lofty perch, and gave a timid response to the man's call. Slowly, by almost distracting methods of coming downward a distance of six inches, and remounting four or five, the bird was coaxed to the lower branches of the tree. The maid passed the cage to the man, but the bird rediscovered the lilac bushes, and took refuge again in their branches.

Without a word, the man handed the cage to Mary, and their eyes met in a smile of friendly conspiracy. The man then crouched by the fence, and as the bird again began restlessly to measure the distance back to the big tree, he rose with such a sudden bound that it covered motionless for an instant and he quickly closed his large hands over it. With great tenderness he held the quivering mite until Mary got the cage near enough for him to transfer the prisoner.

"If the little fellow knew that his freedom would deprive him of his life, he'd thank us for capturing him, wouldn't he?" As he spoke Mary colored with surprised pleasure, for she recognized the voice of the man with whom she held those daily telephone conversations.

"Yes; he didn't have his freedom long enough to learn how many other things it deprived him of." The man's surprise at this enigmatical remark would have been greater had it not been eclipsed by his surprise at recognizing the voice in which it was spoken.

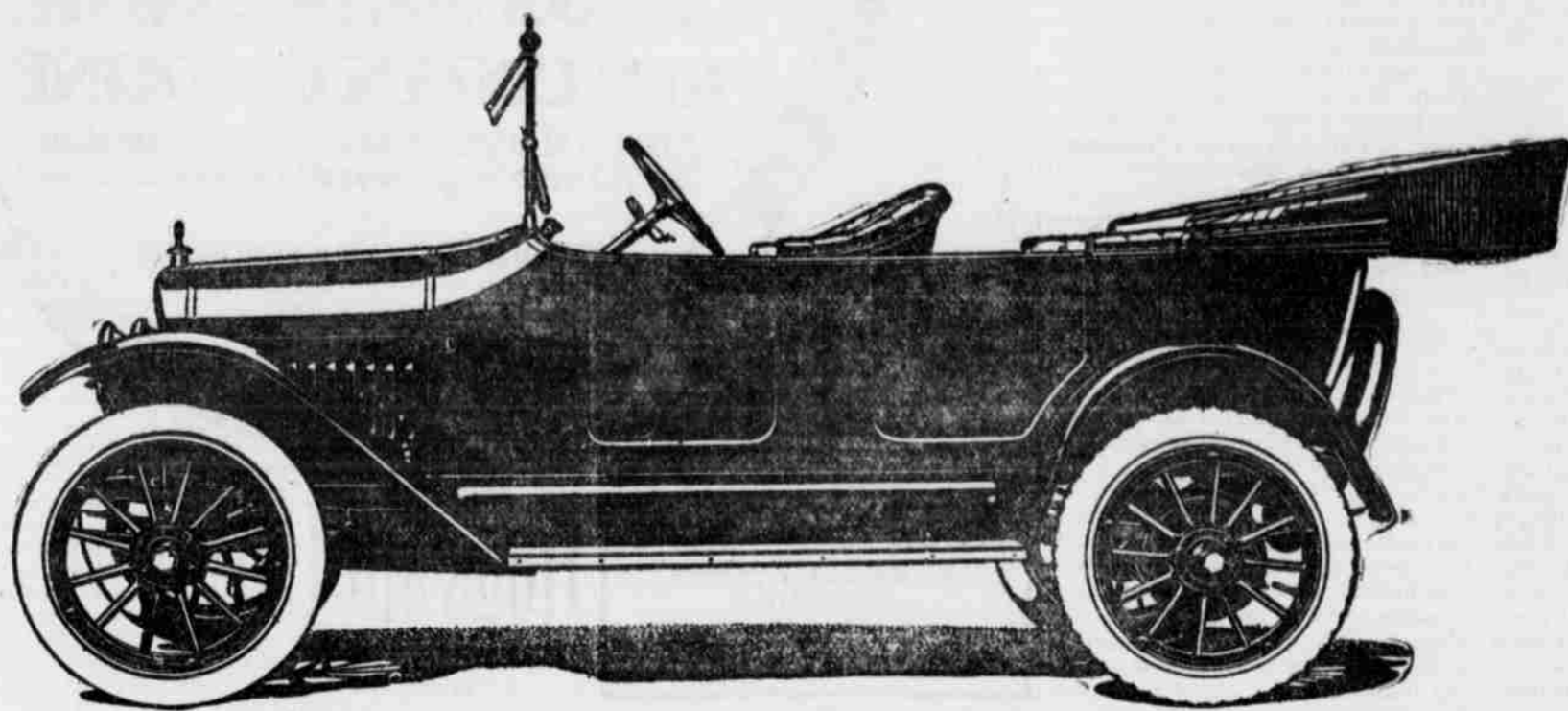
"Why surely I've learned to know Miss Hanson's voice by telephone too well not to recognize it at closer range," he said simply. "Don't you talk to Wells at the Macon-Barnes Printing company every day?"

"Yes, and I recognized your voice, too, Mr. Wells."

"If you'll give me the pleasure of knowing you as well as your voice, Miss Hanson, I'll thank that little bird for scheming so long to enjoy his freedom."

Mary's answer was soft and brief, but it led eventually to a willing surrender of her so-called freedom in exchange for the protecting companionship of John Wells. Instead of a cage, he provided a charming bungalow, where contentment so encircled both of them that no craving for a fuller freedom ever came to either.

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