

GOOD Short Stories

Douglas Stewart, being asked how far back he could remember, declared: "I recollect a nurse called Ann. Who carried me about the grass. And one fine day a fine young man. Came up and kissed the pretty lass. She did not make the least objection. Thinks I, 'Aha! When I can talk I'll tell mamma.' And that's my earliest recollection. It was before bicycles became so popular as they are now that a Yankee farmer was importuned by a dealer to buy one for seventy-five dollars. 'I'd rather spend the money on a cow,' was the farmer's answer. 'But what an idiot you would look riding about the town on the back of a cow.' 'Perhaps so,' replied the farmer, 'but not half such an idiot as I'd look trying to milk a bicycle.'"

In arguing a case in an English court, the late Frederick Rene Coedert, whose wit was rarer-like, took occasion to depreciate the legal learning of Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon, whom his opponent was quoting. The trial judge took kindly exception to this. "I have read his opinions," he said, "and I have often wished I knew as much law as he did." "I wish to God you did!" retorted Coedert.

The other night two vaudeville singers of rag-time songs entertained some visitors who had been invited by Fritz Scheff to spend the evening in her apartments. Miss Scheff said that she would like to hear the Pterrot song from "Babette" synopsized, and, as they did not know the song, she sat down to the piano and sang it for them. The coon singers, unaware of her identity, opened their eyes at hearing her voice. At the close of the vaudeville entertainment, when the rag-time men were leaving, one of them whispered, confidentially, to Miss Scheff's husband, Baron von Bardelben: "Say, mister, that wife of yours is all right. If she had her voice cultivated, she would be good enough for the stage."

Jules Huret, the French journalist, says that his father, afterward a wealthy merchant, had, in the beginning of his career, a small shop in a large building, the rest of the building being occupied by a rich clothing firm, which, on leasing their portion of it, made an arrangement with the owners that they should also have Huret's shop when they needed it. This time arrived, and the manager of the clothing firm, estimating Huret's wealth by outside appearances, went to him and told him, patronizingly, that he would have to leave. "I have leased the whole building," he said, "and need your shop. Go, and don't make any fuss, and we will help you find a new place. Otherwise, we will charge you a rent that will simply beggar you." Huret asked two weeks' time to think the matter over. The manager called at the end of that time, and Huret, receiving him with smiles, said: "Ah, it has been nicely arranged. We are all to stay here. I don't pay rent at all, but you pay twenty-five hundred francs more than last year, I have bought the building."

QUEER NAMES OF VILLAGES.

Postal Officials Find Oddities in the Nomenclature of Towns.

When a settlement is established in this country about the first thing that the inhabitants petition for is a post-office. No matter how unimportant the place may be in the opinion of the rest of the world, it is not so to the residents. They firmly believe that they have a coming metropolis, and dignity will not permit them to do without a place for the reception, delivery and forwarding of mail. Every country town has the facilities of the United States mail, for where there are no towns the rural free delivery goes.

In naming the coming metropolis the settler generally bids defiance to euphony and chooses the name such as the Indian does for his offspring. Of the latter people it is said that when a child is born the father steps to the door of the teepee and glances about the immediate country, and even the sky. The object that most forcibly impresses itself upon his mind is the one that gives him the clue to his child's name. Sitting Bull was thus named; so was the famous chief Red Cloud; so were spotted Tail, Gray Wolf, Little Bear and all the rest of the aborigines.

The civilized settler names his town much in the same fashion, for there is a very faint dividing line discernible between civilized man and the savage when the environments are similar. It is, therefore, not singular that there are in this country, and in others, for that matter, many towns with curious names.

Some of the curiously named post-offices, selected at random are: Tub, Pa.; Robbers Roost, I. T.; Bird in Hand, Pa.; Lamedeer, Mont.; Popcorn, Ind.; Why Not, Ky.; Hat off, Ga.; Sopchoppy, Fla.; Juggtown, N. C.

Sevenstars, Pa.; Fearnot, Pa.; Judytown, W. Va.; Pig, Ky.; Goodnight, Ky.; Red Knob, W. Va.; Red Lick, Miss.; Gump, Pa.; Zim, Minn.; Zif, Ill.; Zero, Ky.; Yellowdirt, Ga.; Yellowjacket, Idaho; Rideout, Fla.; Gumlog, Ga.; Blue Eye, Mo.; Goodwill, S. D.; Gooseberry, Ore.; Goochland, Va.; Gee, Ky.; Red Key, Ind.; Grip, Pa.; Walkebaik, Pa.; You Bet, Cal.; Good Thunder, Minn.; Maidstone, Vt.; Congruity, Pa.; Badaxe, Mich.; Two Johns, Md.; Rabbit Hash, Ky.; Bat Cave, N. C.; Goodwine, Ill.; Happy Creek, Va.; Nut, Fla.; Bigbug, Ark.; Big Moses, W. Va.; Nix, S. C.; Rat, Mo.; Haystack, Ky.; Cowpens, S. C.; Dice, Mich.; Love, Va.; Abiquiu, N. M.; Chinese Camp, Cal.; Bonnet, S. C.; Poverty Hill, S. C.; Red Bird, Ky.; Job, Mo.; Loveless, Ala.; Ajax, La.; Hat, Va.; Red Apple, Ala.; Two Licks, Pa.; Twitty, N. C.; Yellowhouse, Pa.; Yellow Rabbit, Miss.; Crane Eater, Ga.; Tonight, Ga.; Blue Jacket, I. T.; Charlie Hope, Va.

These are found in Tennessee; Peedee, Chestnut, Sewanee, Hartman, Chickabuck, Young Blood, Yell, Bonecave, Chimneytop, Goodbye, High-health, Bulls Gap, Dickey, Mug A B. C., Barefoot, Wild Goose, and these in Texas: Coats, Baby Head, Catspring, Lovelady, Beankiss, Bigfoot, Mud and cash. Others are: Sunday, Monroe county, Ala.; Jam, Mich.; Sideburn, Va.; Birds Nest, Va.; Mule, Ore.; Goforth, Pendleton county, Ky.; Vinegar Bend, Ala.; Birdsong, Hinds county, Miss.; Marked Tree, Ark.; Jakanjones, Ark.; Jamboree, Ky.; Coltsneck, N. J.; Zinc, Ark.; Zig, Mo.; Hardpan, Pa.; Sugar Bush, Wis.—Washington Star.

ENEMIES, YET FRIENDS.

Instances of Fraternal Feeling During Bloody Times of War.

Many stories tell how the soldiers in our Civil War, men in blue and men in gray, held friendly parleys between the lines during intervals when the firing ceased. Here the triumph of human fellowship over the bitter business of war was natural, for the opposing ranks were of the same nation and the same speech. Two instances of human brotherhood between foes of different nations are related by Joseph Elkinton in his book on the Donkubors. The stories were told him by a veteran of the Crimean, Ivan Mahortov, who fought for the Czar.

During the siege of Sebastopol, when the batteries on each side were decimating the ranks of the other, at least three times he heard men of the enemy saying, "Brethren, Russians, don't hit—fire aside," and the Russians responded, "Fire aside, brother."

"After this," said the old man, with tears in his eyes, "there was no more such carnage, and would to God that men and angels might never witness such awful work again!"

The other instance of the humanity which will ever assert itself while men are men, even when the grim destiny of war compels them to act as destroyers, came to Mahortov's personal knowledge in this way:

The commander of his ship detailed him to visit a small detachment of the crew, who had been stationed on the land to raise vegetables in a certain ravine. Three of the Russian sailors had been captured by the English. Mahortov, taking tremendous risks, for it was in the heat of the war, stole through three picket-lines at night.

Questionable Philosophy.

"Now," said the employer, "badly as I hate to say it, your confessed crookedness makes it incumbent upon me to release you from your position."

"Release me!" exclaimed the employe in surprise. "Release me—and maybe get some inexperienced hand with a brand-new theory of how to be crooked and not get caught! The absurdity of it! I've skinned you every way there is and you've caught me. I'm at the end of my rope and ready to be decent—in fact, I don't know how to be anything else. I go, but I shall remain unemployed for a few days just to give you a chance to recall your rash words."—Baltimore American.

The Old Man Knew Him.

The young man wrote to the old man from the far West:

"Father: Like the prodigal son of old, I am coming home, to spend Christmas."

Then the old man wrote to the young man in the far West:

"John: You're comin' home to spend Christmas and what money you can collar. But there's no fatted calf around here. The veal gave out a year ago!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Charcoal Eater's Daily Thought.

They are a hull heap ob people dat set ask millionaires long 'bout Christmas an' squeeze dey purse lak his wif a purty gal all de res' ob de year. Miss Jacksón.—Baltimore News.

The Question.

"What are we going to do with the rusts?" asked the apprehensive citizen.

"My friend," answered Senator Sorghum, "that isn't the question. The important thing to be considered is, 'what are the trusts going to do with us?'—Washington Star.

Why of It.

"I wonder why people say 'As smart as a steel trap?'" asked the young man. "I never notice anything so remarkably smart about a steel trap."

"A steel trap, my boy," replied the sage from Sageville, "is smart because, unlike some people, it shuts up at the proper time."

Facts in the Case.

"Half the milk you leave in the pail every morning disappears," protested the female customer.

"You ought to have a waterproof pail," said the milkman.

"Oh," retorted the woman, "it isn't the water that leaks out."

Such Dear Friends.

Edyth—I just heard something about you.

Mayme—It must be something scandalous.

Edyth—Why do you think so?

Mayme—Because you look pleased.

Wanted Figures.

"What would you do if I were to die and leave you, darling?" asked the bridegroom, who was on the shady side of 70.

"Leave me how much?" anxiously asked the bride, who was—well, let us say 29 years and 11 months old.

Still Had a Chance.

She—I understand you are a joke writer.

He—I may be guilty, but I never talk about the stuff I turn out.

She—That's good. There's always some hope of reformation when there's a sense of shame.

On the Wrong Trail.

"It is no more than right that the strong should aid the weak," said the landlady.

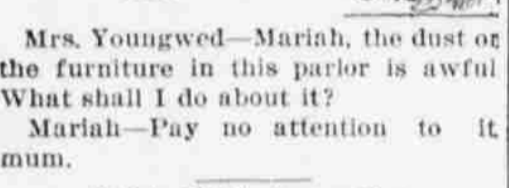
"And yet," rejoined the sarcastic boarder, "I fail to see how dropping a hunk of butter in the coffee would benefit it any."

Sarcasm.

Noozey—Hello, Snappe, what are you going to do with the camera?

Snappe—Going to bore an artesian well in our sitting room; you didn't suppose I was going to take pictures with it, did you?—Philadelphia Ledger

What She'd Suggest.



Mrs. Youngwed—Mariah, the dust on the furniture in this parlor is awful. What shall I do about it?

Mariah—Pay no attention to it, mum.

Life's Little Anomalies.

Clara—Pepper, they say, makes people irritable.

Cora—That's queer; Harry gets mad when the pepper bottle is empty."—Detroit Free Press.

Positive Indications.

Mabel—Did Gladys have a fashionable wedding?

Maude—Very. Why, her wedding dress was nearly torn off before she got inside the church.—Judge.

Natural Deduction.

"That singer gets \$500 a week," remarked the critical patron of the vaudeville show, "yet she has a voice like a buzz saw."

"Perhaps," rejoined his friends "that is why she makes so much dust."

Telephone Repartee.

"Who are you?"

"Who are you?"

"I asked you first."

"Well, I won't talk unless I know who you are."

"All right—neither will I; good-by."—Detroit Free Press.

'Twas Ever Thus.

Jimjones—Howells doesn't have much to say about political principle since he was elected to Congress, does he?

Samsmith—No; he's busy looking after his political interests now.

Strangers' Infant.

"That baby of mine is a natural born soldier," said the sleepy-looking man.

"How's that?" queried his friend.

"He's always up in arms," replied the weary parent with a sickly grin.

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

If King Peter can see his way to retiring on a comfortable pension, that's his best move.

Are the days coming when the wifeless college professor will find himself also jobless?

Compared with the anti-toxin trust, every other trust that can be mentioned seems a veritable archangel.

Maude Gonne is a ma, and will for a while at least be more interested in baby foods than in the Irish question.

Scientists are as excited over finding a dead ichthyosaurus in Chile as a woman would be over finding a live rat in her pocket.

Justice Brown of the Supreme Court has recovered the use of his eyes, but the goddess with the poised scales remains blindfolded.

The whalebone trust has advanced the prices of its ware 20 per cent. This is because of the scarcity of whales and because of one or two other good and sufficient reasons.

Mothers of Boston may now check their babies for 25 cents while they work for a day. Papa would freely give 25 cents, yen, 50 cents, to check the baby's little holler at 2 a. m.

Young John D. Rockefeller says no man can fool his conscience. This no doubt is the truth, but the trouble is that some men have consciences which wouldn't be worth fooling even if it could be done.

Young ladies in California have formed an anti-kissing society. Each member has resolved that she will never allow a man to kiss her. Of course, if he does it when she is looking the other way, that doesn't count.

The old saw, "How have the mighty fallen," is aptly illustrated by the coal barge Dessong, now discharging a cargo at Providence, R. I. This humble-looking craft was once the private yacht of the Khedive of Egypt, and she transported the famous obelisk at Central Park, New York City, from Egypt to this country.

WASHINGTON'S REVERENCE.

An Anecdote of the Father of His Country and of His Mother.

Much of George Washington's firm strength of character was due to his splendid ancestry, as the following little anecdote will testify:

While reconnoitering in Westmoreland County, Virginia, one of General Washington's officers chanced upon a fine team of horses driven before a plow by a burly slave. Finer animals he had never seen. When his eyes had feasted on their beauty, he cried to the driver:

"Hello, good fellow! I must have those horses. They are just such animals as I have been looking for."

The black man grinned, rolled up the whites of his eyes, put the lash to the horses' flanks, and turned up another furrow in the rich soil. The officer waited until he had finished the row; then throwing back his cavalier cloak, the ensign of rank dazzled the slave's eyes.

"Better see missis! Better see missis!" he cried, waving his hand to the south, where above the cedar growth rose the towers of a fine old Virginia mansion. The officer turned up the carriage road and soon was rapping the great brass knocker of the front door. Quickly the door swung on its ponderous hinges, and a grave, majestic-looking woman confronted the visitor with an air of inquiry.

"Madame," said the officer, doffing his cap, and overcome by her dignity. "I have come to claim your horses if the name of the government."

"My horses?" said she, bending upon him a pair of eyes born to command. "Sir, you cannot have them. My crops are out and I need my horses in the field."

"I am sorry," said the officer, "but I must have them, madame. Such are the orders of my chief."

"Your chief? Who is your chief, pray?" she demanded with restrained warmth.

"The commander of the American army—General George Washington," replied the other, squaring his shoulders and swelling with pride. A smile of triumph softened the sternness of the woman's features. "Tell George Washington," said she, "that his mother says he cannot have her horses."

With a humble apology, the officer turned away, convinced that he had found the source of his chief's decision and self-command.

And did Washington order his officer to return and make his mother give up her horses. Not he listened to the report in silence, then, with one of his rare smiles, he bowed his head.—St. Nicholas.

When the spring comes a great many unhappy people, for the first time in their lives, make a flower garden in a new place—the cemetery

daily to be stricken with nostalgia. Humane considerations alone should be sufficient to make men relinquish this senseless practice.

What sort of women are those who spend hours and hours at meetings of the Political Study Club, and kindred bodies, discussing race suicide? Don't you honestly think that an alienist could get in some fine work at one of their meetings? A Mrs. Judge is quoted as saying: "If the men had to give birth to every other child in the family there would never be more than one in a household, and only that providing that they began first." "True," exclaimed several political students in chorus, and there was great applause. "And that's what ought to be," came a voice from the front row. Surely no mother took part in such utterances or approved of them. What woman who has experienced the feel of baby fingers on her cheek or down her neck can remember the suffering that brought the dear little one here; much less regret it? You know some women never become mothers, no matter how big a brood they may have. Again, fortunately for the race, there are babyless mothers aplenty in this mysterious old universe. No real mother ever wishes that the men folks had to give birth to even one tiniest mite of a babykin. Mothers, through all time, have gone down in their agony to very death and taken from his hands a barely breathing new life to nourish and cherish. And have the fathers stood by indifferent? No; they have looked on in love and reverence, and loving the mother and loving the babe. And is that all? No; these same fathers have gone out into a hard world and fought and fought that this mother and babe might be sheltered and shielded from all that is hard and disagreeable. This is what every true father to-day is doing. A mere man who has a family and supports it in this day and time does a great stunt. If he never saves a cent, but just scratches along and meets his bills and helps his wife to make men and women of his children, that man is a success. And a baby in the family comes to comfort him and make him forget his rasped nerves, his broken aspirations, his disappointment in men and events when he goes back to his home tired out with making a living. Really, now, it's too bad about these Political Studyists.

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The record of the Penobscot tribe of Indians for the year has a contribution to the general discussion concerning woman's work, actual and possible. The honors on the tribe farm were won by a woman. The bushels of potatoes and other vegetables which she raised are so many witnesses to the new relation to life and industry which the Indian of to-day sustains.

King Edward and his queen made themselves very popular, when Prince and Princess of Wales, by the genial willingness with which they "opened" bazaars and took the lead in all manner of public functions. The present Princess of Wales is said to be averse to that sort of thing, and, even surveying the shining precedents before her, seldom manages to do it as if she liked it. Yet to smile and spend money gracefully is one of the chief duties of modern royalty, and one suspects that her royal highness has an easier time, after all, than the women who organize and conduct the festivals.

A savant has just published in Brussels a treatise on shaking hands, which practice he pronounces to be extremely dangerous. When two men clasp hands they exchange thousands of microbes, according to the Brussels gentleman's discoveries, there being an average of about 80,000 germs of various kinds upon every square half inch of the manly palm. It must not be supposed, however, that every hand is as bad as that. The Brussels savant admits that a maiden fair whose hands are soft and white may not have more than 40,000 or 50,000 microbes scattered over both of her palms. Hence we may conclude that holding her hands is attended with but small risk to the holder. But she, on her part, should be very careful. The Brussels savant says doctors, surgeons, nurses, hair dressers, barbers, hutechers, sausage-makers, tripe merchants, tanners and leather dressers have very filthy hands. Therefore it is always best for a lady to make sure, before committing a gentleman to take her hands in his and hold them fondly, that he isn't a surgeon or a sausage-maker or a purveyor of tripe, to be absolutely on the safe side she should never allow any man save those who are metal workers to hold her hands. Metal workers, it has been found, have few microbes in their hands; since metal sets up an oxidizer which acts as an antiseptic. The results of the Brussels savant's investigation are exceedingly interesting and serve as a further proof that hand-shaking is even as risky as it is foolish. Let us give up the habit and so avoid causing thousands of microbes