

LITTLE FIDDLERS.

A PEEP AT A MERRY SCHOOL OF YOUTHFUL VIOLINISTS.

Like a Concert of Katydid When the Two Hundred Children Draw Their Bows. Budding Virtuosi Taking the First Lesson—A Kind Professor.

Fancy 200 little fiddlers all fiddling away at once! Fancy the noise! Fancy the fun! It is like a concert of katydids to hear them, and like stirring up a shoal of sand fiddlers to see them running up and down the steep stairs to and fro from their lessons. Moreover, it is like trying to catch an old granddaddy sand fiddler to catch one of these little youngsters and ask him how he learned to fiddle and when and where. Saturday afternoon is the time to see these baby virtuosi in their glory. From east, from west, from Harlem and Hoboken they come skipping along by twos, by threes, with maids in attendance, to worship at the shrine of the violin. Professor Watson, of Fourteenth street, is master of this marvelous school, and he draws no lines regarding sex, age or previous condition. Rich and poor alike come and are treated to the same free instruction.

PUPILS OF ALL KINDS.

"You would be astonished," he said, as the unique entertainment drew to a close, "to know some of the names that are among the two thousand we have on our books already. No one, no matter how rich he may be, cares to throw away money on finding out simply whether a child's fancy is a natural taste or a whim. So people who know of the school send their boys and girls to me. I can soon find out if the child has any cleverness, and I immediately notify them. If the boy of rich parents likes his violin, they naturally buy him a good instrument and engage a teacher. Other children come and go, more or less on their own fancy dictates, but they usually have some one, an older sister, or an aunt or a grandmother, who takes pride in their little fiddlings and soon buys for them a violin of their own, which they can take home and practice on to their hearts' content. In that way I get a partial recompense for my time and trouble, and at the same time I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have been able to keep some children's minds away from worse things during their first few years."

It was 3 o'clock when the youngsters began to arrive. Some fly down the street as if they moved on steel springs, grinning happy little grins of satisfaction as they pounce on sturdy legs up to the rooms above. Others, coming for the first time, wander open mouthed along the street, asking now a hand organ man, and now a policeman, if they knew "where the music man's place is." Until they know Professor Watson's name they are apt to have some trouble in finding him, for Fourteenth street is full of "music men." At last they see some other little boy with a fiddle and their troubles are all over.

Once upstairs, their real troubles are usually over, but the poor, unhappy kids do not seem to think so. A little twist catches their tongues as they start upstairs, and by the time they have reached the office a double bow knot could not tie them any tighter. The professor's daughter takes them in hand first and, after their unruly little members get limbered up a bit, finds out all about each new pupil. Then she passes them along to the next room, where they make their professional bow to one of the teachers, to say nothing of their first violin. They stand around in helpless rows until the busy professor comes flying along, then one by one are stood out in the middle of the floor, their knees joggling beneath them, and set to work.

THE FIRST LESSON.

"Feet so!" says the professor, his right heel in the hollow of his left foot. Invariably the left heel drags itself up to the right foot.

"Brrr!" says the professor. "You would tip over on your nose if you tried to stand so! Now the violin under your chin, so that your cheek just rests on it to keep it steady. Hands off the strings, but holding the case, so! Elbow down. Bow in your right hand. Oh, no, never, my boy. That's a good way to hold a saw, but it's a bad way to hold a violin bow. There, look you. Thumb so! First and second fingers so—last two fingers so."

Very clumsy the pudgy little fingers are to begin with, but in a few minutes when the violin fright is worn off the fingers begin to limber up, and in a surprisingly short time these babies are bowing away as natural as life.

In far less time than it would take a greater mind these youngsters know each string as well as they know their own names, better in fact, than they knew them when they faced Miss Watson in the office. Then they are crazy for a tune. Before any one could believe it possible their shrewd little wits have conquered the mysteries of the staff and the notes, and they are sawing away at e, a, d, g, a, e, with all the gusto of artists. The next step is to twist the little fingers so they can slide up and down the strings and pinch them down at the proper points, and as soon as that is done there begin to grow variations of the first wonderful theme.

To an outsider the hour on a busy Saturday afternoon is a wonderful sight. The mental dexterity with which the clever professor handles his small scholars, his patience, and the interest which he takes in the poorest and least clever of these little free pupils, is something to be admired. Professor Watson was the famous Ole Bull's manager, and when he finds a child whose heart goes out into the old fiddle that snuggles up under his chin he takes him about through the rooms and tells stories of the great master, and shows him the pictures and relics that hang about the wall, the watch which was his gift and choicest treasure of all, his violins.—New York World.

For chapped or cracked hands use a bit of witch hazel. It is also good for pankerred mouth or throat, with golden seal and white sugar added.

Cocoa Hunting.

There was sport in the coon hunt for our fathers, and in a measure a man's importance in some communities was judged by the number of coon skins he could nail to his barn door after a hunt. Why the coon has come to be despised by sportsmen in these latter days is one of those things about which the remark has once or twice been made that no fellow can find out. He is as cunning as the fox and more difficult to trail. He is, moreover, the cleanest of animals, and eats only the most wholesome of food. He should not be despised, surely, because he can be hunted only at night, for in threading the woods in the darkness, following dogs that you cannot see, and whose baying alone breaks the stillness, there is a most singular enchantment.

Even in localities where coons are the most abundant, nine out of ten of the present generation never saw one, and few people know anything about them or their habits. Although the coon prefers the vicinity of civilization as his habitat, he plans to keep aloof from the eyes of men, and his habits render this an easy task. By day he lies in out of the way retreats, in the depths of hollow trees or isolated crevices and holes in the rocks. He wanders forth only at night and although his foraging expeditions may take him to the very doors of farmers, and even within the boundary lines of villages, he never betrays his presence. If more than one coon is brought to bay in a tree they will invariably be females or a mother coon and her offspring. The scent the coon leaves on the trail is at all times less than that of other game quadrupeds, but when the female is nursing her young during the summer months her scent is hardly perceptible to the dogs, thus saving her and her litter from many a race for life. The scent of the coon grows stronger as the cold weather advances, and through November and December the dogs follow it with comparatively little difficulty.—Philadelphia Press.

A Warrior's Matrimonial Fate.

Walking along Lake Shore with an old soldier, who had married thrice and for money every time, I had some new and valuable light shed upon the question, "Is marriage a failure?" The warrior takes an easy view of life. He is inclined to think that women are not as bad as they are painted, but that they require strong handling. "The marriage laws are much too easy on women. Now, look here! I'm a man of family—I mean of between \$2,500 and \$3,000. That's much, but as Shakespeare says, 'his mine own.' I married a widow for my first wife. She had \$5,000 a year of her own and no social position, as her first husband was a saloon keeper. I got her into refined and fashionable society.

"How did she repay me, think you? Well, she insisted upon spending all her own coin upon herself, and then demanded half of my little income. Wasn't that pretty cheeky? She paid me nothing for my social position. She got everything and gave nothing—save the \$5,000 a year when she died to a twenty-second cousin near Prince Bismarck's home in Pomerania. My second wife was in her second widowhood, but not a bit softer about money matters than when she was a maiden fair. Everything settled upon herself. I paid for the wedding breakfast. She had a large income and she never gave me a cigar. She went to heaven and left her money to a sister. The sister wouldn't marry me, but I got a nice little woman with four children, who had buried three husbands and was as merry as a butterfly. She is alive now and is the hardest nut of all. She doesn't take half my money—she takes the whole of it, pays my bills and allows me fifty cents a day for spending money. No, sir; marriage was no failure—for three women who had the good fortune to marry me."—Chicago Journal.

A Cheap Lesson.

"That piece of paper isn't worth a shuck. Is it?" queried a stranger, as he handed a check in to the cashier of a Grindwold street bank the other day.

"No, sir," was the reply, after a brief glance.

"It is signed John Smith."

"I see it is."

"He's a fraud!"

"I think so. Where did you get the check?"

"At the depot. Lent a party \$30 to get off on a train with, and he gave me this check of \$50 as security."

"You have been confounded."

"I know it. I knew it half an hour ago. When I started to come to town my brother said I'd let some one make a fool of me."

"And you have."

"I have. Turned out just as he said. Say, wasn't that confidence operator rather fresh?"

"How?"

"See here. Here's a wallet with \$3,800 in it, and the fool only asked me for \$20! Won't he kick himself if he ever finds out how cheap he let me off!"—Detroit Free Press.

An Absent Minded Man.

Cincinnati has the champion absent minded man. A gentleman living in the suburbs went in a store on Walnut street to make a few purchases. The only light in the store was a candle standing on the counter near the money drawer. After making his purchases he handed the proprietor a bill, and after returning him the change the proprietor walked to the rear of the store to arrange some thing, when suddenly he was left in the dark. He started toward the counter, and, groping around it, found, not the candle, but the change. It struck him then that probably the man, in a fit of absent mindedness, had taken the candle instead of his change. He started out after him, and, catching up with him, saw that he had the bundle in one hand and the candle in the other. After apologizing for the mistake the stranger took his change and gave back the candle.—Chicago Times.

OLD AND CURIOUS COINS.

PIECES OF SCARCE KINDS OF MONEY AND THEIR FANCY PRICES.

The Goddess of Liberty in Different Positions—Coins from American Mints That Are More Prized Than Those That Were Current in the Days of the Caesars.

A craze which of late years has greatly developed and at this time shows no sign of falling off, is that of collecting rare coins. Chicago leads all western cities in the number of its numismatists and boasts some fine collections. It might be supposed that the demand would be principally for coins of great antiquity, but this is not the case. The chief inquiry is for sets of American coins, and some numbers are so rare as to readily command fancy prices. In certain years some descriptions of coins were not minted at all, while in other cases few copies were issued. Other coins are valued because of some error or eccentricity in the die; in fact, any variation from the ordinary types, if in good condition, will bring more than its face value.

ODD SIZES AND DATES.

Of the silver dollars, nearly all the earlier issues are in demand at a slight premium, and that of 1794, in which the goddess of liberty is depicted with flowing hair, is worth \$20. As for the dollar of 1804, of which few are known, any copy in good condition will bring \$200. The flying eagle of 1838 and 1839, and the coins of 1851, 1852 and 1853, with the liberty loving lady seated, are worth at least \$15 each. The one time despised trade dollars, issued 1879 to 1883 inclusive, are at a premium of 10 cents each. Of half dollars, those of 1796 and 1797, with fifteen or sixteen stars, bring \$15 each. Others of value are dated 1794, 1801 and 1802, and there are many more, such as 1836 with a liberty cap, 1838 with an "O" mark under the head, and a coin of 1853 with liberty seated, which are worth from \$2 to \$5 each. The scarce quarters are those of 1823 and 1827, with the head to the left, each valued at \$15, while the 1796 fillet head is to be had for \$2 and that of 1804 for \$1. Twenty cent silver pieces of 1876 bring 30 cents; those of the succeeding years are cheap at \$1.50. The dimes of the grandfathers are mostly worth from five to twenty times their face value, while half dimes in silver bring from 50 cents to \$2 each, and a special brand of the vintage of 1803 will command \$25. Silver three cent pieces run from 20 to 50 cents; nickel fives 15 to 20 cents each, and nickels three 15 to 25.

COPPER LEADS GOLD.

There is a great demand for old copper cents, the first ambition of every collector being to start even with the procession in 1793 or so and bring it down to date with a coin for each year. It will cost him from \$1 to \$5 for the various kinds issued in 1793, \$3 for 1799, and \$2.50 for 1804. With the exception of a cent of 1809 with the head to the left the rest are reasonable in price. Half cents are in demand, and readily command from \$4 to \$6 for those of certain years between 1831 and 1849. But in these it must not be understood that those of all years are equally in request. Those issued 1840-48 inclusive, with the head to the left, average about \$5 each. Washington medals, old fashioned cents, and the copper issues of New York, Vermont, Massachusetts and New Jersey bring, provided they have the necessary earmarks, sums ranging from \$1 to \$10.

There is not much call for gold coins, but trial pieces are valuable, and good proofs of double eagles of some years, as 1853 and 1856, bring a small premium. Scarce half eagles are those of 1815 and 1822, and worth full \$29 each. On other dates from 1795 to 1834 some 20 to 30 per cent. premium is paid. Three dollar gold pieces of 1875 and 1876, with the figure of an Indian princess, bring \$6 and \$5, respectively. Quarter eagles of early dates run from \$3 up to \$9, and there are many gold dollars for which a slight advance on their face value must be paid.

Intending collectors need not distress themselves in looking for dollars of the years 1803-35, inclusive, for Uncle Sam was either short of metal or otherwise busy those thirty years and none were coined. There were no cents rushed on the market in 1815, and no eagles from 1805 to 1837, inclusive. The Confederate States made a die for a silver dollar and struck off a few, but ran out of silver. An authentic coin of that issue would bring \$1,000. As a contrast to this it may be noted that you can get a penny of the Caesars for 50 cents.—Chicago Tribune.

A Shrewd Dog.

Of a sedate but cunning dog out in California this story is told: On one occasion a rabbit was started, and all the dogs with the exception of Bonus dashed off in full pursuit. We were astonished to observe that he, foregoing the intense excitement of the chase, deliberately trotted by a short cut to a hollow oak trunk, and crouching at its base calmly awaited the coming of the fleeing rabbit. And he was not disappointed, for the pursuing dogs pressed the rabbit so hard that after making a long detour, it approached the place of refuge. As it was about entering the hollow trunk, Bonus sprang up and captured it. Now, this old dog was used to hunting rabbits in that field, and knew that the rodents were in the habit of flying for safety to that hollow tree. Moreover, this story is true.—Philadelphia Times.

Done and Undone.

A Dickinson college student, in a spirit of braggadocio, made a bet of \$5 with another young man that he could put two regulation billiard balls in his mouth at one time. He accomplished the feat, and is now a sadder but wiser person. The balls stuck in his mouth, and all efforts to dislodge the same proved futile, until finally an M. D. was called in, who, in order to get them out, was compelled to cut a slit in his mouth on each side. The other fellow paid the bet.—Harrisburg Telegraph.

Once a Tramp, Then a Governor.

Your correspondent, while passing up Pennsylvania avenue with a bureau officer, passed a man named Wilkinson, who was recently turned out of the office of the comptroller of the currency on account of "offensive partisanship." The bureau officer, after passing Wilkinson, turned to me and said:

"You recognize that man? Yes; well, there was an incident in the early part of his life which connects him in a way with one of the most prominent Democrats in Ohio. A good many years ago Wilkinson was moving into a house at Springfield, now one of the most prosperous manufacturing towns in the central part of the Buckeye state. While his goods were being put into the house, and those belonging to the outgoing tenant were being put on a wagon, a seedy looking tramp came up and inquired if he could get something to eat, offering to assist in the work if he was accommodated. The outgoing tenant referred the tramp to the incoming tenant, and the latter took the wanderer into the house and gave him a dinner. There was not much attention paid to that tramp, and for years those who saw him on that day lost sight of him. Finally he reappeared, however, entered into the business of the place and began to grow. He grew in every sphere of life. He became wealthy and influential. A few years ago he was governor, and now he has more property and money than any man in his section of the state. It is not necessary for me to mention his name. He lives at Springfield yet and is a very rich man. His name is a household word throughout Ohio."—Washington Cor. New York Press.

The Spirit of America.

The American love of bombast has made way for the American love of "smartness." Fourth of July firecrackers have outlived the pyrotechnics of Fourth of July orations. We still praise ourselves freely, as our ancestors did, but we do so with less "fuss and feathers." At the bar a similar change may be observed. It is harder than it used to be to "enthuse" juries—to borrow a word which, like "bifalutin," seems to imply that what was once sublime has become ridiculous. Lawyers talk to twelve men instead of "addressing the panel." Rufus Choate, were he to come to life again, would find it difficult to win such cases as he did win, unless he kept his imagination in a leash, shortened and simplified his periods and made his delivery more conversational. Even in orations on memorial days, or at college festivals, colloquial English is heard; and the essays spoken at college commencements are ceasing to be "mere emptiness." In the northern, and especially the northwestern states, the taste for colloquial, rather than rhetorical English is, for obvious reasons, stronger than in the south and extreme west; but it is showing itself in all parts of the country. It is a taste that should be encouraged by all who prefer the simple to the ornate, the natural to the artificial, the sensible to the sonorous.—Harper's Magazine.

The Antipyryn Habit.

The new coal tar product antipyrin has already started a vice of its own. This singular compound was discovered by a German chemist, and on account of its remarkable qualities is now used the world over. It has the power of reducing the temperature of the body by several degrees, and so is of vast utility in treating fevers and feverish stages of many diseases. It does its work by depressing the action of the heart, and generally when employed by physicians it is accompanied with digitalis to neutralize its influence in the latter regard. Women use it partly because it is a sedative and partly because it makes the complexion beautifully clear and pale by keeping the blood away from the surface of the body. The habit, like all others, grows upon the person who practices it. It does harm, however, from the first. With women who are weak it increases their weakness; with those having a predisposition towards heart disease of any sort it increases the tendency to a terrible extent. Besides these results antipyrin exerts a peculiar influence upon the blood, which is not yet thoroughly understood by the faculty. It seems to undergo some decomposition or breaking down when absorbed by the system, developing unknown compounds, which either attack the blood itself or else powerfully influence the nerves and ganglia, which control the vital functions.—Richmond Dispatch.

The Judge Had the Call.

I heard a good story about the late Judge Grosvenor, of Dunkirk, who was the local attorney for the Dunkirk and Warren railroad, and at one time had a cow killed by a locomotive of the road. He presented a claim of \$25 to the proper officer of the road, who, following the ordinary custom, had it referred to the judge, as attorney, to give an opinion as to the liability of the road. The judge had the facts set forth and wrote an elaborate opinion, holding that the road was not liable in the case, as the killing of the cow occurred by reason of the plaintiff's negligence, and cited numerous authorities to sustain his position. The claim was consequently disallowed, but the judge's bill of \$50 for an opinion in the case of Grosvenor against the Dunkirk and Warren railroad was presented to the proper authorities, and in due time he received a check for that amount.—Albany Argus.

Fish Commission Experiments.

Marshall McDonald, United States fish commissioner, is making a comprehensive experiment in salt and fresh water aquariums. He has already constructed several aquariums on the lower floor of the building, and stocked them; and he is now building a large one, 120 feet long, under a separate roof. The commissioner said to the correspondent, "I am going to bring the seashore to Washington, and assemble here a full representation of our marine life." He has sixty or seventy species already sporting in salt and fresh water tanks, one of the latter containing specimens of the earliest type of fresh water fish—the ganoid.—Science.

A Word to The People.

The motto, "What is Home without a Mother," exists in many happy homes in this city, but the effect of what is home without the Local Newspaper is sadly realized in many of these "happy homes" in Plattsmouth.

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