



**The Secret**

'Twas th' funniest thing, and the way we laughed  
As we sat there all alone,  
Would have made one think we both were daft

If the truth were not made known,  
But the baby laughed 'cause she saw it first,  
And she shook her sides with glee;  
And then the fun of it quickly burst  
On her old Dad—that's me.

The way it happened was just this way:

Baby and I were there,  
She in the crib on the pillows lay,  
I in my easy chair.  
The warm sun shone in the cosy room  
And lighted the baby's face  
Till it looked as pure as the lily's bloom,  
Fair as the lily's grace.

The baby looked at her dad a while,  
Her blue eyes full of fun,  
And over her face a little smile  
Rippled and broke and run.  
Dad smiled right back—she smiled some more—  
Then both just shook with glee;  
And mamma peeped in at the open door  
To see what the fun might be.

But the baby holds the secret well—  
Never a word says she.  
The joke was bully, and she won't tell;

And neither will Dad—that's me.  
But, O, 'twas a wonderful joke we had,  
Just shared between we two,  
Baby Blue Eyes and her Doting Dad—  
And don't you wish you knew?

**Satisfactory**

"How did you like the play?"  
"It was fine. All the characters were killed in the first act and the show was finished up with a lot of moving pictures."

**The Brute**

"Good gracious, Maria! Who emptied that rag-bag on the couch in the sitting room?"  
"Boo-hoo!" sobbed Mrs. Upta Dayte, "you brute, that is my new spring hat."

Naturally enough, all that he could do to square himself was to pay the milliner's bill without batting an eye.

**Spring**

Hail, gentle Spring! with balmy breeze and buds that gently peep; with cough and grip and shaking sneeze, and mud just 'steen feet deep. You bring us back to cheer and hope; and also, I would state, cigars made from Manila rope, bought by the candidate.

You bring us back the warming rays of sun upon the hills; and also gloom to him who pays steep millinery bills. You bring the color to the rose, and scent the growing brakes; you paint with red our tender nose and fill us full of aches.

Hail, gentle Spring! Our roundelay to you and yours is due; and eke the bill that we must pay for spring apparel new. We love to sing of your bright skies and waving budding trees, but can't forget our home way lies through mud up to our knees.

Hail, gentle Spring! Each singing bird that flits from bough to bough

informs us of the ice man's word: "Dig up the price somehow!" We sing our liting songs to you, but that's a towering bluff—if we should pay you what's your due our language would be tough.

**April**

Put away the old snow shovel,  
Get the spade and hoe and rake;  
Likewise oil the old lawnmower—  
Grass to mow and beds to make.  
Onion setts and peas and radish;  
All the garden sass that grows.  
Got to get the garden ready  
While the wind of April blows.

**Spring**

The boys are spinning tops in the street, and—  
The boys are practicing base ball on the vacant lots, and—  
The candidate is beginning to grow numerous, and—  
I saw a robin yesterday, and—  
The clothing store windows are showing "spring styles," and—  
Every millinery store window is full of new bonnets, and—  
My wife is showing symptoms of that peculiar annual distemper known as housecleanitis, and—  
My mail is full of seed catalogues, and—

The girls are parading their doll carriages on the sidewalks, and—  
There are so many signs of spring on every hand that I reckon I'd better overhaul my tackle box and see that the old reels are in working order.

**April Musings**

Mr. Business Man—you with the worries and perplexities incident to the daily grind—isn't it a fact that there is something about this April atmosphere that makes you uneasy?

Of course there is.  
You may think that is due to your long months of close application to business. You may think you are worn out mentally and physically, and that you feel badly because your system is run down.

Well, that isn't it—that is, seldom. It is the call of the primitive—the desire to get back to nature. You just want to break loose and get out into the woods and forget all the conventionalities of life. You want to don a soft shirt, an old pair of shoes, some old and possibly ragged clothes, and hike out into the woods where you can be something of a nomad for a few hours at least.

You wheel around in your revolving chair, tilt backwards and look out at the April sky, and imagine that the feeling you have is one of weariness. Nothing to it. It is the barbarian that lies just underneath the thin veneer of civilization. You have confined yourself to your tasks until the real man revolts—the real man that thinks more of the green woods, the running streams, the singing birds, the chatter of squirrels, the call of the quails, than he does of tare and tret, of interest and discount or of profit.

It isn't a rest that you need. Not at all. What you need is real exercise. You need to sneak out in the early dawn with the poorest clothes you can find, and get into the woods and fields where you will tramp on the virgin sod, get cockleburrs in your hair and beggar lice on your clothes. You want to get real dirt on your hands—not the

grime of the office or the shop, but the real genuine dirt that God made. You want to pull an old slouch hat down over your eyes, tie a bandana handkerchief around your neck, and sprawl out under a tree and forget that you ever studied etiquette and practiced small talk in my lady's drawing room.

No time to lay off and visit some rural retreat? Nonsense! You haven't time for anything else just now. And you do not have to travel long and weary miles to find what you need. Just about a mile from the end of the car line, over the brow of the hill and down into that clump of trees—there's the place you are looking for. The fresh, cold waters of the creek come singing around the bend and splash over the stones with a rythm that takes a year a minute off your stooped shoulders. The April wind has driven the moisture from the fresh sod underneath the oak that bends out over the water, and a finer, softer couch was never made by the hand of man. Just the place to lie down flat upon your back, close your eyes to everything visible and your mind to everything thinkable, and pump your congested lungs full of real air—air untainted by coal smoke, city gases, flying dust and metropolitan microbes. With ears closed to the hum of business you can hear the hum of the bees and the song of the birds, and unless you are a most miserable misanthrope the bees and the birds will furnish you with a chorus that will make the chorus of "Elijah" sound like scouring the dishpan after mixing a batch of bread.

Leave your watch at home. Depend upon the sun and your appetite to mark the flight of time. You'll be surprised how long and restful a day will seem under these circumstances. You might stick a fishing line in one pocket, a small can of worms in another and a sandwich in every other pocket. The more pockets for sandwiches the better. The fish in the creek will not be quite as big as the ones you caught while you were working so hard on your midsummer vacation last year, but they will give you a lot more fun. Cuf a willow pole and don't call to mind the fact that there are such things as steel rods and multiplying reels. Just imagine that you are playing hookey from school again, and wonder what you will do with the fish. When you played hookey for sure and caught a big mess of fish you didn't dare take them home. Gee, don't you wish you could do that all over again?

It will be a long day. For that reason you'd better save a couple of the sandwiches until you think it must surely be close to the middle of the afternoon. Then eat them, for it will be just about lunch time. Then, when you think that you'll have to hustle to get home before midnight, start back, get on the car and ride home. You'll get there just about time for supper, and you'll be so tired and happy that you won't have time to finish a hearty meal before you tumble off to sleep. But my, how good you'll feel next morning. A little stiff in the joints, perhaps, but a score of years younger and as fresh as a boy just out of college.

"It's just a day next to nature that you need—not pills and potions. You need to answer the call back to the primitive—to get back to nature. Can't leave your business? O, fudge!  
You can't afford not to leave it for a day and be a real, genuine Aborigine for about twelve or fourteen hours.

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