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BATTLE OF THE WITS

When Artemus Ward and Henry J. Byron First Met.

A TILT IN A LONDON CLUE.

The Famous Humorist Started In to Have Some Fun With the Dramatist, but Found in the End That He Had Met His Match at Chaffing.

What follows relates to the first meeting of the late Henry J. Byron and Artemus Ward. It was at the Savage club in London after one of the Saturday dinners, and Tom Robertson suggested to Artemus to have a tilt with Byron and if possible draw him out. The genial showman had only been in England a few days, but he knew Byron's "metier" and went for him in this fashion:

"I fancy I have seen a face like yours before. Did you ever have a brother Alonzo?" Robertson was behind Artemus and winked at Byron. "Alas, I had!" replied the dramatist, instantly catching the situation. "He was a mariner, engaged on the deep?"

"That's so."
"You haven't heard of him for five years?"

Byron affected to be lost in reflection and deliberately replied: "It's five years ago this very day. How curious you should mention it, sir!"
"Well, sir," replied Artemus, taking out his handkerchief and pretending to wipe away a tear, "I sailed the salt sea with your brother. We were wrecked together in the gulf of Mexico, and before help came I killed and ate him. The moment I saw you I recognized the likeness. He was a good fellow, full of tender feeling."

"I am glad you found him tender," interrupted Byron, also pulling out his handkerchief.

"But, sir, I am awfully sorry I ate him," said Artemus in the most imperturbable fashion. "Had I known I should ever meet his brother I am sure I'd have gone without food some weeks longer. But I was driven to it, and you will forgive me, won't you? I liked Alonzo," and he offered his hand to Byron, which the latter shook with cordiality.

"Excuse my emotion, won't you?" gasped Byron in his handkerchief. "He never wrote and told me what had become of him. I hope he agreed with you."

"A slight indigestion afterward. He was a little tough," replied Artemus, "but we'll not speak of that. We both suffered. He suffered most. But remember, sir, the law can't touch me now. It was stern necessity, and necessity, as you may have heard, knows no law. But I am willing to pay you damages for the loss. About what would you think a fair compensation?"

"Don't mention it," said Byron, who now thought it time to turn the tables. "I think your name is Ward," said he.

"Yes."
"Artemus Ward?"
"Quite so."
"You had a father?"
"I had."

"He was a Yankee peddler in his own country, was he not? Sold bug pizen and fine tooth combs?"
"You've hit the comb—I mean the nail—on the head."
"He died in the black country of England, did he not?"
"He did."

"Well, I killed him. I knew you were his son the moment I laid eyes on you. He was a nice old gentleman, and I made his acquaintance in Staffordshire. He wished to go down a deep coal mine; so did I, and we went down together, had a good time, explored, lunched with the miners, drank more than was good for us and proceeded to return to mother earth's surface. After you have been down a mine you are fond of your mother, I assure you. The prodigal felt nothing to what I experienced. We entered the huge basket and were being slowly drawn toward the mouth of the pit when I saw the old rope was about to snap under the strain. It was a perilous, a horrible, a critical moment. The weight of two men was too great, and your father was a broad, bulky man. Self preservation is the first law of nature. An instant more and we were both lost. We seemed to be about fifty feet from the top.
"I hastily called your father's attention to something—implored him, in fact, to look down the mine. He did so, and as I gently tipped him over he went whirling and crashing down to the bottom. It was rough on him, but I saved myself. I ciphered it out on the instant like this: He is an old man, nearly bald, deaf in one ear, two teeth gone in front, with only a few years to live. I am half his age, strong and healthy, the father of a young family, with a career before me, a comedy to finish for the Haymarket and a burlesque accepted at the Strand. Now, I ask you, under the circumstances, did I not behave nobly?"

"You did, you did," sobbed Artemus. "I would have acted that way myself."
"I am glad to find you so intelligent. You ate my brother and found him tough, and I am the assassin of your dear old father," continued Byron, keeping up the farce of pretended emotion. "We are both avenged. Let us draw a veil over the past and never allude to these heartrending incidents again."
"Agreed. We cry quits. Shake!" roared Artemus, extending both hands and dramatically dashing a flood of imaginary tears from his eyes.—London Standard.

Bascom and His Students.
John Bascom, once president of the University of Wisconsin, always had a keen insight into men, and for much of his life college students constituted mankind for him. Once when he was a class officer the names of two men were read by him as absent from morning prayers. One of them, a pietist, stopped at his desk and said: "Professor, when the chapel bell was ringing I was engaged in prayer and did not hear it."
"You're not excused," responded John, with contempt in his eye and in his voice.
Then, calling back the other man, who was about at the door on his way out of the room, he said to him: "What's your excuse?"
"I haven't any, sir."
"You're excused."

He used to have debates in his classroom. At one of them a student, whom Bascom subsequently described as a "flourishing fellow," in the heat of his eloquence said, "I wish that I had the ability and the time to exhaust this subject."
"You have the time," said Bascom.—Harper's Weekly.

Smart Boy Wins.
The visitor was examining the class of small boys. He held the chalk in midair.
"What number shall I draw on the board?" he asked of one boy.
The boy replied, "Thirty-two."
The visitor drew the number backward, which made twenty-three.
"Is that right?" asked the visitor.
"Yes, sir; yes, sir," answered the boy in a timid way.
"What number shall I take now?" he asked of another.
The boy answered, "Sixty-two," whereupon the visitor drew the number backward, as before—twenty-six.
"Is that right?" he asked.
"Yes, sir," replied the boy.
A long way back a bright eyed boy held up a waver hand.
"What number shall I draw for you?" asked the visitor.
The boy called out, "Forty-four!" Then, when the visitor had drawn it, he yelled out, "Now, if you are so blamed smart, twist that around!"—New York Globe.

A Financial Embarrassment.
A lady who had a kindly remembrance for all her domestic servants met an erstwhile washerwoman and stopped to ask her how she fared.
"Oh, mem, it's terrible financial distress me an the childer's in!"
"Why, what is it? Are you out of employment?"
"No, mem. Work's in a fair state o' stidness and not a ciat do I owe, but it's lashing o' trouble I've got!"
"Are you not paid promptly?"
"As promptly as the day cooms round."
"What is your financial distress, then?"
"Well, mem" (in a burst of horror), "what's killin' me is, I earn \$6 the week an' pay \$8 for me board, an' God only knows how I do it!"—Short Stories.

So Many?
They went in to dinner together. He was very bashful, and she tried in vain to draw him out. Finally she began to talk books, and he became responsive. "And Hugo," she asked, "do you like his style?"
"Oh, yes," he replied, "I find him intensely interesting. I've read a number of his books."
Then she asked, "Have you read 'Ninety-Three'?"
"No, I've—er—only read three. I didn't know he had written so many."
—Lippincott's Magazine.

As Japanese See It.
It is said the Japanese think our grown women most alarmingly overgrown, very shocking in their costume and quite dreadful as regards their teeth and their feet—in a word, outrageous. They consider the kimono preferable to western habiliments because it so completely obliterates the lines of the figure. They teach girls to talk with their lips almost closed, concealing the teeth, and to walk with the feet parallel in tiny steps or even toeing in.—Kansas City Journal.

The Latest Hour.
"What time is it, my lad?" asked a traveler of a small boy who was driving a couple of cows home from the fields.
"Almost 12 o'clock, sir," replied the boy.
"I thought it was more."
"It's never any more here," returned the lad, in surprise. "It just begins at 1 again!"—Lustige Blatter.

And the Boy Was Right.
"If one quart of berries cost 7/4 cents, how much would three quarts cost?" asked a Brooklyn teacher in an oral test the other day.
"They would cost you 22 cents," promptly responded a little boy. "We have nothing less than 1 cent in our money, and the man would just make it 22 cents."—New York Press.

Yes, She Painted.
Young Grotto (admiring picture in parlor)—Does your sister paint, Margie?
"Little Margie—Yes, sir; but she's finished now, and as soon as she puts a little powder on she'll be right down."
—Chicago News.

The Party Line.
Hubby—Why didn't you come to the door and let me in? Wife—I couldn't, George. Our neighbor was talking to somebody, and I was at the phone.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Always speak a good word for the dead and now and then one for the living when you have time.—Missouri Sharpshooter.

A QUEER CALCULATION.

The Power That Would Be Required to Move the Earth.

Statisticians sometimes have queer ideas. One of them amused himself by calculating how much energy, water and coal it would take to move the earth a foot, supposing that it was subjected throughout its mass to a force equivalent to terrestrial gravitation. This is a gratuitous supposition, for in spite of its enormous mass the earth weighs nothing.

Starting with the fact that the earth's mass is about 6,100 million-million tons, our statistician calculates that we should require 70,000,000,000 years for a 10,000 horsepower engine to move our globe a foot. The boiler that should feed this engine would vaporize a quantity of water that would cover the whole face of the globe with a layer 300 feet deep. The vaporization of this water would require 4,000 million-million tons of coal. This coal, carried in cars holding ten tons each and having a total length of thirty feet, would require 400 million-million cars, which would reach 80,000,000 times around the earth. This train, moving at the rate of forty miles an hour, would take more than 5,000,000 years to travel its own length. It would require for storage a shed that would cover 1,000 times the area of Europe.

If we realize that this fantastically huge amount of energy is nothing at all compared with what the earth possesses in virtue of its rotation about its axis, its revolution about the sun and its translation in space with the solar system, of which the earth is but an infinitesimal part of the universe, we may get some idea of the importance of man in the universe and estimate his incommensurable pride at its just value.

A PIQUED BONIFACE.

Meilhac and a Costly Dish That He Did Not Eat.

Among the most absentminded of geniuses was the French composer, Meilhac. On the occasion of the first presentation of one of his operas Meilhac, in evening dress, entered a fashionable restaurant and threw himself down at a table, thinking earnestly about the event of the evening and nothing else.

A waiter brought him a menu. Meilhac, a man of very simple tastes in the matter of food, abstractedly indicated with his finger the first dish on the bill that his eye had struck. Now it chanced that this was the most elaborate and costly dish on the bill, and when the waiter went to the kitchen with the order there was in consequence great commotion there. The proprietor himself was summoned, and he and the principal chef devoted themselves to the preparation of the famous dish. One man was sent for this choice ingredient and another for another. Meanwhile Meilhac waited, absorbed.

At last the dish was brought with a great flourish, and the proprietor, with a proud smile, stood not far away to observe the result. When it was deposited in front of him Meilhac regarded the dish with an expression of melancholy interest.
"Did I order that?" he asked.
"Certainly, M. Meilhac."
"Do you like it?"
"Yes—yes, monsieur; but—"
"Then kindly take it away and eat it yourself," ordered Meilhac, "and bring me two fried eggs."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Couldn't Quit Gambling.
Driving a cab in the streets of London is a young man who has literally thrown away £80,000. The son of a wealthy family in Yorkshire, he went into the army, but soon became distinguished by his gambling propensities. He ruined himself and had to leave his regiment. Some time ago while living in a garret news was brought to him that he had been left £80,000. There was a condition attached to the legacy—that the money was to immediately pass to another person, named in the will, if the legatee was ever found gambling. A detective was set to watch the ex-captain and saw him enter a well known club one evening, where he lost the sum of £300, which he had raised on his expectations. He forfeited his £80,000 before he had ever laid hands on it.—London Tit-Bits.

In Coils of a Python.
Mr. Cocklin, walking in thick grass near the Marico river, Bechuanaaland, was thrown to the ground by a fourteen foot python, which coiled around his legs and then tried to drag him to a tree near by, so that, by coiling its tail around the trunk, it might proceed to crush him to death.
When within two yards of the tree Mr. Cocklin got a hand free and shot the snake, which was so heavy that it needed three men to lift it.—East London Dispatch.

Hardly.
Miss D.—Angelina, why don't you marry Lieutenant Y?
Miss A.—First, because he has no brains, and he can't ride, dance or play tennis. What could we do with him?
"But he swims beautifully."
"Oh, yes. But one can't keep one's husband in an aquarium, you know."—London Tit-Bits.

The Poor Doctor.
"Say, Weary, here's a doctor dat says de best kind of exercise is walkin' to your work."
"Is dat so, Limpy? Den I suppose de doctor gets his exercise by visitin' de cemetery on foot."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Where might is master, justice is servant.—German Proverb.

SOUND SIGNALS.

Their Unreliability Under Certain Atmospheric Conditions.

At practically every lighthouse of importance on the coasts of this country is some sort of signaling apparatus to be used when weather conditions prevent the lights from being seen. Sometimes it is a bell, sometimes a whistle, sometimes a Daboll trumpet, sometimes a steam siren. The idea is to make a noise which will be heard where ordinarily the light would be seen, to give the mariner warning which a fog prevents the light from giving. Of course, in the case of a first order light, which may be seen twenty miles, the signal is, in part, a failure, only the best and most favorable of conditions carrying a siren sound so far. The signals, of course, have certain characteristics to prevent the hearer from mistaking one signal for another.

At certain times, in certain weathers, and more particularly in certain localities, these sound signals behave, as far as their hearers are concerned, in a most erratic manner. In some cases the lighthouse board gets indignant complaints that on a certain date a certain fog signal was silent when it should have sounded. Investigation shows that the signal was sounding at the time, but was, for some inexplicable reason, inaudible to the very ship it was meant to reach. Naturally, such instances have been very carefully investigated, and certain facts have come to light as a result.

It has been found that sound, like light, is sometimes affected by atmospheric conditions and that it will skip about in a most bewildering way. Thus, a fog signal may be heard with ear splitting force a mile from its source and 500 yards farther on may disappear entirely. Yet another 500 yards and it again sounds as strongly as before. The theory in such a case as this is that the sound hits the water and is echoed back from it into the air, to return in a curve of more or less magnitude and again strike the water. The sound, in other words, skips like a stone skillfully thrown into the water, the points of audibility corresponding to the places the water is hit and the areas of silence to the flights of the stone.

This is a simple case. In others the sound forms a circle, a ring of audibility, outside of which there is a silence and inside of which nothing in the nature of a signal can be heard. And to make the matter more puzzling the conditions sometimes do not appear and the signal acts as it should, while at other and rarer occasions it takes these freaks and falls in its purpose.
Yet no laws have been deduced to cover the cases in point—Scientific American.

Severe Rebuke.
Constable, the famous painter, once gave a remarkable instance of the sweetness of his temper, which scarcely anything could ruffle. The story was told by Julian Charles Young, whose uncle had witnessed the incident.
He called on Constable one day and was received by him in his front room. After half an hour's chat the artist proposed to repair to the back room to show him a large picture on which he was engaged. On walking up to his easel he found that one of his little boys in his absence had dashed the handle of the hearth broom through the canvas and made so large a rent in it as to render its restoration impossible. He called the child up to him and asked him gently if he had done it. When the boy admitted his act Constable took him on his knee and rebuked him in these unmeasured terms:
"Oh, my dear pet! See what we have done! Dear, dear! What shall we do to mend it? I can't think—can you?"

CITY LODGE DIRECTORY

- A. F. & A. M.
McCook Lodge No. 135, A. F. & A. M., meets every first and third Tuesday of the month, at 8:30 p. m., in Masonic hall.
CHARLES L. FAHRENSTOCK, W. M.
LOS CONE, Sec.
- DEGREE OF HONOR
McCook Lodge No. 3, D. of H., meets every second and fourth Fridays of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall.
MRS. LAURA OSBURN, C. of H.
MRS. MATTIE G. WELLS, Rec.
- EAGLES
McCook Aerie No. 1514, F. O. E., meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall. Social meetings on the first and third Wednesdays.
W. H. CUMMINS, W. Pres.
H. P. PETERSON, W. Sec.
- EASTERN STAR
Eureka Chapter No. 89, O. E. S., meets the second and fourth Fridays of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Masonic hall.
MRS. SARAH E. KAY, W. M.
SYLVESTER CORDEAL, Sec.
- KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
McCook Council No. 123, K. of C., meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall.
C. J. RYAN, G. K.
F. G. LECHLEITER, F. Sec.
- KNIGHTS OF ETHIAS
McCook Lodge No. 42, K. of P., meets every Wednesday, at 8:30 p. m., in Masonic hall.
J. F. CORDEAL, C. C.
C. W. BARNES, K. E. S.
- KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
St. John Commandery No. 16, K. T., meets on the second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p. m., in Masonic hall.
EMERSON HANSON, E. C.
SYLVESTER CORDEAL, Rec.
- LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS
McCook Division No. 623, L. of L. E., meets every first and third Saturday of each month, at 8:00 in Berry's hall.
W. G. SCHENCK, C. E.
W. D. BURNETT, F. A. E.
- LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN
McCook Lodge No. 599, B. of L. E. & E., meets every Saturday, at 8:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall.
W. R. PENNINGTON, M.
W. S. BILLER, Sec.
- MODERN WOODMEN
Noble Camp No. 663, M. W. A., meets every second and fourth Thursday of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall.
JOHN HENT, V. C.
BARNEY HOFER, Clerk.
- ODD FELLOWS
McCook Lodge No. 137, I. O. O. F., meets every Monday, at 8:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall.
E. H. DOAN, N. G.
SCOTT DOAN, Sec.
- P. E. O.
Chapter X, P. E. O., meets the second and fourth Saturdays of each month, at 2:30 p. m., at the homes of the various members.
MRS. C. W. BRITT, Pres.
MRS. J. G. SCHOLER, Cor. Sec.
- RAILWAY CONDUCTORS
Harvey Division No. 95, O. R. C., meets the second and fourth Sundays of each month, at 3:30 p. m., in Berry's hall.
JOK HEGENBERGER, C. Con.
M. O. McCLURE, Sec.
- RAILWAY TRAINMEN
C. W. Bronson Lodge No. 47, B. of H. T., meets every Friday at 8:30 p. m., in Berry's hall.
H. W. CONOVER, M.
F. J. HUSTON, Sec.
- R. A. M.
King Cyrus Chapter No. 25, R. A. M., meets every first and third Thursday of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Masonic hall.
CLARENCE H. GRAY, H. P.
CLINTON B. SAWYER, Sec.
- ROYAL NEIGHBORS
Noble Camp No. 962, R. N. A., meets every second and fourth Thursday of each month, at 2:30 p. m., in Ganschow's hall.
MRS. MARY WALKER, Oracle.
MRS. AUGUSTA ANTON, Rec.
- R. S. M.
Oe-co-box-ee Council No. 16, R. S. M., meets on the last Saturday of each month, at 8:30 p. m., in Masonic hall.
RALPH A. HAGBERG, T. I. M.
SYLVESTER CORDEAL, Sec.
- WORKMEN
McCook Lodge No. 61, A. O. U. W., meets every Monday, at 8:30 p. m., in Berry's hall.
WEBB STEPHENS, M. W.
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