

The Point in Question

THE KINDLY CRITIC

The Georgia watermelon is here, and is being sold by the pound. They are a little high, but they are the real thing—sweet, red and luscious. To enjoy a melon properly one should never eat it when there is "company" in the house—decorum and Chesterfield manners are out of place when eating a good melon, cut lengthwise. It is really sacrilege to use a knife, fork or spoon when eating a section of a good melon. If one is of a bilious nature, a dyspeptic or has indigestion, the use of table tools is admissible, but if you are healthy and a connoisseur in melons, and you are alone with your God and a generous slice, take your portion up in your hands, firmly clasped at each end, fall to, and let joy be unconfined.

"Now if I was running a chautauqua, I'd give the people more variety." It was Jimmy, the "roughneck" talking and he was occupying his favorite seat in the barber shop—the "shiners" chair. "You see," he continued, "people tire of too much talk and singing, and particularly singing by quartets that double and treble in brass, Irish monologues, readings and Indian dances. I'd of put on two fast ones with the gloves,—just a harmless bout for points—and I'll bet you the people would have enjoyed it, because any crowd that will get noisy and give the haw haw to that story of six apples for five cents, five for four cents, four for three cents, three for two cents, two for one cent and one for nothing, why, say, those easy 'marks' would gather in a crop of joy over a glove contest that would last them a year. No, sir, they don't furnish the right stuff."

It is human to "kick," the same as it is to err. I asked a farmer one day this week concerning his wheat crop. Said he, "It went from the thresher to the elevator at \$1.00 per bushel; the best success I ever had at wheat raising." The conversation veered around finally to tariff matters and the howl this same wheat raiser put up when speaking of the possible increase in value of socks was something that would not appear well in print. What's the use of worrying over socks that are still unbought? There have been worse conditions in this country than dollar wheat and dear socks. I've seen the day right here in Nebraska where my friend, the wheat raiser, didn't wear socks in August.

She was from the rural districts, and one could easily see that a Sunday night session of the chautauqua was an event in her life. The band concert was on, and the last strains of "The Poet and Peasant" had scarcely died away, when she inquired of her young companion: "that is beautiful, but I don't remember it as being among the Gospel Hymns." No, grandma, that melody is not in the song books of the churches, but for all that it is beautiful, and from lands of sun to lands of snow, it soothes the listener and for a time makes him forget the everyday cares of life. Being beautiful it is appropriate upon all occasions.

"You may say what you please to the contrary, but the good that men do is heralded about in a much more noisy and conspicuous manner than the good that women do." It may be that the woman who uttered the above has a predilection for woman's suffrage and is biased in her opinions—I don't know as to that; but opine that there is a modicum of truth in

her assertion. Said she further, "I know of a recent case where a man sent fruit and flowers to one who was suffering, and the praise, the laudation and advertisement he received in return was beyond reason and good taste. 'A prince,' one gushing woman called him. Why I know of one woman in Falls City who has been closing the eyes and crossing the hands of the dead all of her life for friend and neighbor and does it so quietly, so modestly—as if it were her bounden duty—that no one thinks anything of it. No one speaks of her as a princess or queen on account of her charitable disposition. The sick and suffering look for her, always, and she never fails them, for it is a part of her life's work to 'minister unto' the sick. And then there is another point in this woman's favor—she is not running for office."

I saw a little comedy enacted at the chautauqua grounds Saturday night that was not down upon the program, and I enjoyed its finale, to say the least. I saw an old man trip over a guy-rope of one of the tents and fall in an awkward manner. Two young ladies suspended the mastication of their gum long enough to enjoy a hearty laugh, even though the old man appeared dazed by his fall. A moment later one of the young ladies backed onto a tent rope and fell backwards in a most ludicrous manner—she simply sat down, and in a most emphatic way too. And strange to say, she had no giggle for her own mishap. I laughed at her misfortune, but I kept away from the guy-ropes all the rest of the evening.

Uncle Pewee Nobs says anybody can lecture. He says you can buy lectures in bunches from eastern manufacturers, and that all you have to do is to commit them to memory and push your chest out and make 'em laugh. He says a man told him of a case where a chautauqua hired a man to lecture, whose subject was "Sparks From the Anvil," and that the following year another man came along and gave the same lecture under the name of "Rat, tat, tat." But Uncle Pewee attended five entertainments—he had a complimentary—and his friends say it was a great sight to see him with a white collar on and his hair combed all through the week.

President Cyrus Northrop, of the University of Minnesota, says:

"There is a feeling among certain classes of people that it is distinguished not to know anything about the Bible. The average freshman, or senior, especially in the East, does not know whether Moses was one of the twelve apostles or not."

Let's see, was it not a college professor that said all of our old church hymns were void of sense or harmony? Was it not the head of a great university that said Longfellow's poems were mere doggerel? Was it not a college professor who claimed he had found the soul of a frog? Have not all doubts as to the authenticity of the story of the creation of man, the story of Jonah and the whale, the story of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still—in fact all points of heresy—emanated from some pup at the head of a college or university? If students come home from college with addled brain and freak apparel and ideas it is little wonder, because some of the greatest asses of the universe are at the heads of colleges.

WATSON TELLS A STORY

By J. L. HARBOUR

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Watson likes to tell a story, and he is aware of the fact that he tells one uncommonly well when he can tell it in his own way. But this privilege is not always accorded him when Mrs. Watson is around, and she was with him at a delightful little dinner party the Rayburns were giving the other evening. Watson was in his best story-telling mood and he had a capital new story to tell. He was sure that no one at the table but Mrs. Watson had heard it. He awaited his opportunity, and during a lull in the general conversation he began with:

"Oh, by the way, I heard a capital little story at the club the other evening. It is a new Hebrew story Charley Dwight told me. He said that—"

"Why, Mr. Watson, I thought it was Harry Ross who told you that story?" interrupted Mrs. Watson.

"No, my dear, it was Dwight who told me. He said—"

"I am quite sure that you said it was Harry Ross who told you the story when you told me. Is it the story about the two Jews at a dinner-party, and one of them—"

"Yes, yes, it is that story, and Dwight said that—"

"I remember very distinctly that you said it was Mr. Ross. You know you said that he—"

"Well, well, perhaps I did say Ross when I meant Dwight. Ross was present. But it don't matter which one told the story."

"Of course not, only it is best to be accurate."

"Dwight said that—"

"You mean Ross."

"Well, Ross said that a couple of Sheenys were—"

"Don't say 'Sheenys,' dear, it sounds so disrespectful."

"I don't mean any disrespect, and—"

"It is always best to say what one means, and 'Sheeny' is not only disrespectful, but it is vulgar."

"Well, these two Jews, Goldstein and Rosenbaum, were at a dinner-party, and—"

"You said their names were Schloss and Strauss when you told me the story."

"Oh, the names don't matter."

"I suppose not, but, as I say, it is best to be accurate."

"Dwight said that these Jews were at a dinner-party, and—"

"I thought it was a public banquet, dear?" said Mrs. Watson, gently.

"Oh, well, what's the difference? Anyhow—"

"There is a good deal of difference between a dinner-party and a public banquet."

"Very well, call it a banquet, then."

"I wouldn't if it wasn't a banquet."

"Anhow, there were solid silver spoons on the table, and—"

"Then it must have been a dinner-party. One never sees solid silver at a public banquet."

"I didn't say it was a public banquet."

"I didn't say that you did, my dear boy."

"Well, the point of the story is that during the progress of the dinner Goldstein took one of the solid silver spoons and slipped it into his shoe, and—"

"I don't see how he could have done that unobserved," remarked Mrs. Watson.

"He did, according to the way the story goes, and—"

"It don't seem reasonable."

"Lots of good stories are unreasonable. Rosenbaum saw Goldstein put the spoon into his shoe, and—"

"Oh, it wasn't that way. You are getting ahead of the story. When you told it to me you said—"

"I am telling it just as Dwight told it to me. He said—"

"Don't you remember that you said Dwight said—only it was Ross—that Goldstein—only I'm quite confident you said the name was Strauss—that he said before putting the spoon into his shoe: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I—'"

"No, no, no! It was Rosenbaum who said that when he got a spoon a little later. He said—"

"It don't seem to me that that was the way of it. I am quite sure that—"

What she was "quite sure" of remains a mystery to this day, for at that moment the hostess gave the signal for the guests to rise, and the story Watson had privately rehearsed in his room was never told, and this is no place in which to divulge what Watson said to his wife on their homeward way.

Potatoes Keep Well in Coke.

Consul General Richard Buenther of Frankfort, reports that a German publication, the Practical Adviser in Fruit Raising and Gardening, states that a new method for keeping potatoes and preventing sprouting consists in placing them on a layer of coke. Dr. Schiller of Brunswick, who has published the method, is of the opinion that the improved ventilation by means of coke is not alone responsible for the result, but believes that it is due to the oxidation of the coke, which, however, is a very slow one. Coke always contains sulphur, and it is very possible that the minute quantities of oxides of carbon and sulphur, which result from the oxidation, mixing with the air and penetrating among the potatoes are sufficient to retard sprouting. Potatoes so treated are said to keep in good condition until the following July.

AT THE VERY LAST

By CYNTHIA GREY

"Is this the place, aunty?"

"Yes, Bluebell."

"And is this the very spot where you fell after the man said good-by to you?"

"Yes."

"Then you lay back on the beautiful green moss and shut your eyes, for your ankle hurt just awfully, and then a dog whined close to your ear and you opened your eyes right into the big, beautiful black eyes of a very tall, handsome knight, who lifted you up in his arms and carried you to yonder gate."

"You know the story well, but you must not forget that it is a secret."

"I have not forgotten, but you and I may talk of it here."

"Yes, you and I may talk of it—until tomorrow."

"To-morrow you are to be married. What is he like, that man you are to marry—like the knight?"

"No, child, no! Let us talk now of the knight, and not of—of him!"

"And after he reached the gate," continued the child, "he lifted you way up high onto the horse and walked, yes, walked every step of the way to the house close beside you, didn't he?"

"Yes, and then?"

"And then after that he came to the house to see you and brought you flowers, and books, and music, and grew to love you very much, and you loved him, and didn't know it for a long time, and when you found out you sent him away because—for I never knew just for what you sent him away, aunty."

"For honor, Bluebell."

"Whose honor?"

"A woman's honor, dear, a woman's honor," groaned the woman, and to herself: "Heaven knows I love him still, and to-night Clarence comes back, and to-morrow I shall marry him because I promised—promised, before I knew what love meant."

"Who was the man who was saying good-by to you just before you fell, aunty? You never told me."

"His name," said the woman, slowly, "was Clarence Duncan."

There was a sound of footsteps on the gravel path.

"You have come," said the woman, rising from among the shadows about the door, and she held out her hand.

He pressed his lips to her cool forehead. "It seems natural to be back," exclaimed Clarence, as he followed her into the hall. "I always hung my hat on that hook and my coat here. I think I expected to see the house in dress-up clothes, ready for the—for to-morrow."

"It will all be very simple and quiet," said the woman. "If that pleases you."

"The simpler the better for me, all right," said the man, laughing.

There was the sound of small feet running down the hall. "Aunty, aunty, here's a letter; I put it away this morning and forgot it," and Bluebell clung to her aunt's skirts in a tremor of remorse. "Please read it right away, for it may be 'portant, you know."

To humor the child she tore open the letter. "Make yourself comfortable, Clarence; you always liked this chair," and she drew the letter from the envelope.

The letter was without beginning, plunging at once into a subject which evidently absorbed the writer.

"I know I ought not to write to you but I am sure you would understand and forgive me if you knew how my heart aches. Clarence doesn't know that I am writing. He went away as soon as we found out how much we cared for each other. He is coming back to you because he promised, long ago, and he is breaking his heart and mine. I thought, maybe, if you knew you would save us. Forgive me, forgive me, I am so unhappy."

"This letter will interest you, Clarence."

"So," smiled Clarence; "it is a woman's writing—why—" and he flushed hotly, "she should not have written; I—I—"

"Read it," said the woman, softly. "The letter is very important. Bluebell, it has something to do with our secret. Will you tell the story to Mr. Duncan?"

"The one about the handsome knight?"

"Yes."

The little girl told the story to the wondering man, pausing here and there to look at her aunt, who always nodded for her to go on. "And at the very last—but this part is all my secret, for I have never told even aunty—at the very last, the knight came back on his big black horse that pranced and jumped and made aunty and the knight laugh a great deal."

That night Hugh Vernon received a telegram which read: "All is well; can you come home?"

Less to Do.

"The late Russell Sturgis," said a New York architect, "continually marveled at the swift passage of time. This great architect and critic continually found new examples of the swift way men grow old and ugly while still believing themselves young."

"He repeated to me one day a remark he had heard in a barber shop. 'An old chap, with hardly a hair on his head, snapped at the young barber, on the completion of a haircut: 'You are not the thorough workman your father was, my boy. He used to take a good half-hour to cut my hair.'"

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