

Carlton Clarke's Zinc Case

By FRANK LOVELL NELSON

Romance and Mystery Entwined in Master Mind's Coup

"BODY Found in Trunk." began Clarke. "But I'll skip the headlines. Upon opening a box which they had purchased at an unclaimed-freight sale two young men residing in Austin were horrified yesterday to discover the body of a man. It was hermetically sealed in a zinc case which was included in an ordinary round-topped trunk, which in turn was packed in sawdust within a box. Considering the fact that the box had remained for three years and a half in the freight warehouse, the body was in a remarkable state of preservation, due probably to the manner of packing it. There is no clue to the identity of the body other than that it was billed to a fictitious address on South Jefferson street and was shipped from Salt Lake City, having been received there from Etteso, Wash.

"That's the gist of it, but, of course, after the fashion of you reporters the story is told from several angles in order to fill the column. It looks like a promising mystery."

"Yes, but one that probably is impossible of solution considering the length of time," I answered.

"I'm not so sure of that. Did it ever occur to you that any crime can be solved if someone is willing to expend money, time, and travel? Given unlimited resources, I believe I could organize a detective force which would make punishment a certainty for every criminal. Crime goes unsolved because the men capable of doing effective work can make more money in other lines. I'd rather like to look into this case. Does your influence extend to the county morgue?"

"Deputy Coroner McNally in charge there is one of my particular friends. I am sure he will favor us."

"Suppose we call there this afternoon, if your engagements will permit."

I acceded, but shortly after breakfast something arose that put the matter entirely out of our minds for the moment. I was busy at my own devices, and Clarke was deep in a very creditable work on oriental mysticism when there was a violent tug at our door bell. I opened the door and admitted a handsome, athletic young fellow, square of jaw and keen of eye, but apparently laboring under the most intense excitement.

"Where is Mr. Clarke?" I must see him at once," he gasped.

"Knowing Clarke's rule to see all callers when possible, I immediately ushered him into the library."

"Oh, Mr. Clarke," he began without awaiting an introduction. "I am sure I have a word from her. I must have your help. The police will laugh at me but I feel it is a clue. I shall go mad if it falls. I know she is living. I have never given her up."

"But calm yourself, my dear sir, and let me have your story connected," said Clarke. "Remember, I am ignorant even of your name."

"Pardon me, I forgot. I am so full of this new clue. My name is Richard Dudley."

He needed to say no more to Clarke or myself. The name recalled instantly the disappearance, six months before, of Evelyn Mason. The country had rung with it. The papers had been filled with it. The best detectives in the country had struggled with it. Clarke himself, though not called in by the family had taken a deep interest in the progress of the case. A note of romance had been added to the affair by the recently announced engagement of the iron magnate's daughter to Richard Dudley, Harvard's old crack half-back who, at the time she so mysteriously dropped out of sight, was traveling in the orient. He had hastened home as fast as steamer and train could carry him and had taken up the thread where the police had dropped it in despair.

"Then you have a clue, Mr. Dudley," asked Clarke when he had assured our caller that his trouble was well known to us.

"I think so. Here is what I received this morning. I hurried to you at once."

And Dudley handed Clarke a slip of paper.

Clarke read the paper and handed it over to me. It contained but one word, "Ossette," written in a sprawling hand.

"Where did you get this?" asked Clarke.

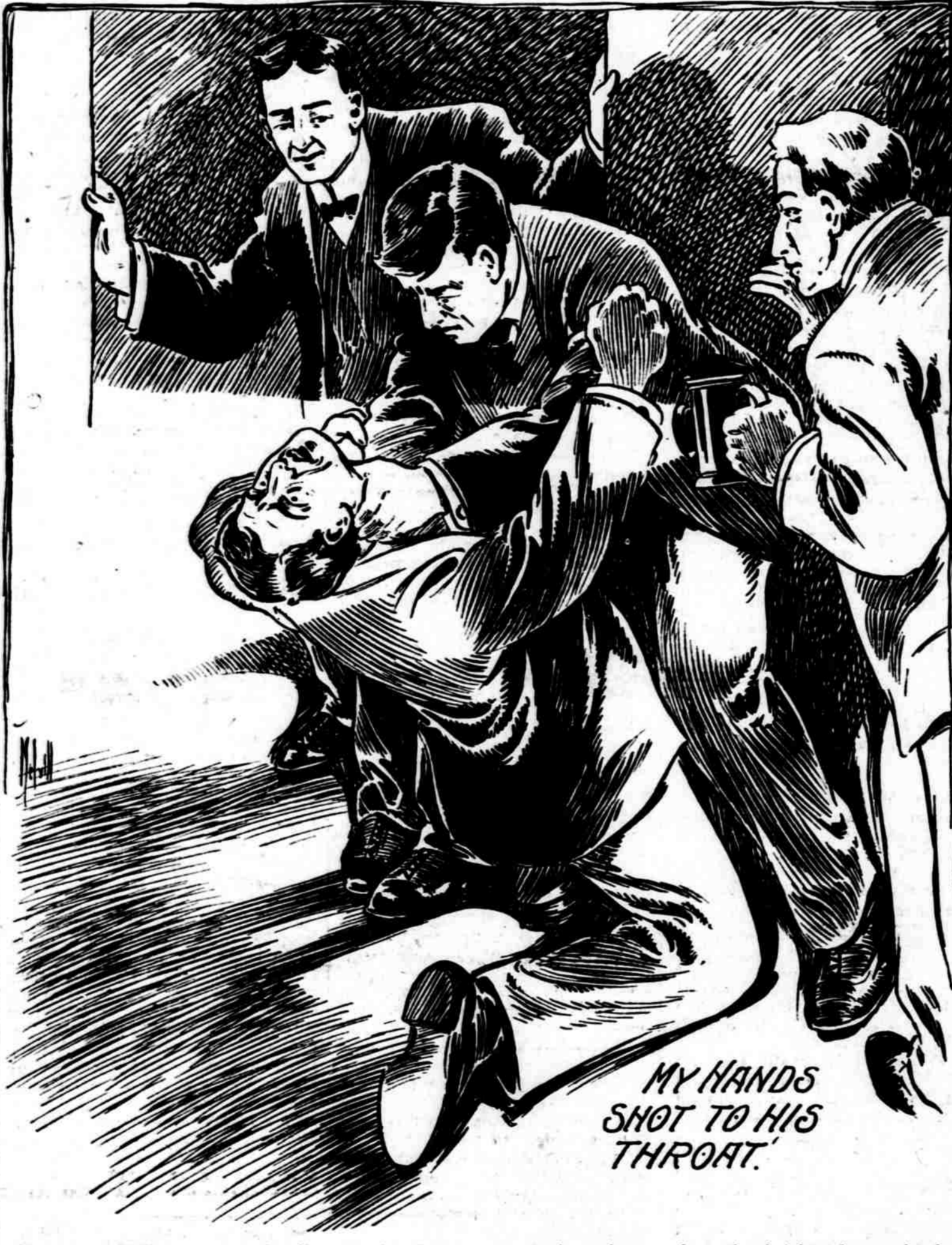
"It was slipped under my door last night. I have no idea by whom. I found it there this morning. Oh, Mr. Clarke, tell me that you have hope and that we will find her."

"What particular importance do you attach to this paper?"

"Oh, can't you see? But I forget. No one knows it but myself and her immediate family. Why, man! that's Evelyn's middle name! Evelyn Ossette Mason. She never used it. No one knows it. Don't you see she must have sent this?"

"In that case, Mr. Dudley, you have indeed a most valuable clue; more val-

Telepatho-Deductive Solver of Criminal Mysteries Tackles a Problem Embodying Smuggling, the Fearful White Plague, and Two Lovers Are Brought Together in Grand Finale—Solution of the Complex Puzzle.



MY HANDS SHOT TO HIS THROAT.

uable, I trust, than you suspect. It will however take time and labor to develop it. I imagine it may take us to the Pacific coast. Are you prepared to take such a trip?"

"At once, if necessary. Oh! we shall find her, shan't we, Mr. Clarke?"

"The body already had been prepared for burial, and Clarke did not ask to see it. The pine box he glanced at just long enough to read the fictitious address. The trunk also he passed with a look. When he came to the zinc case, however, it riveted his attention. He examined closely every seam and corner of it.

Clarke decided upon a trip to the Pacific coast.

When we finally reached the end of our long journey and succeeded in locating the town of Etteso, we found a little hamlet numbering about 500 souls. Across a snug harbor shone the broad expanse of the Pacific.

After some search we located the private sanitarium of Dr. Clinton Witherbee, a man known to Clarke to be a villain of the deepest dye. We entered a room in Witherbee's asylum.

What I have next to relate has been pieced together out of a blur of hazy

memories. I am not aware just when I lost consciousness. My first sensation was that some one was looking intently at the back of my head. Then a soft, purring, voice said: "Mr. Carlton Clarke, Mr. Richard Dudley and Mr. Paul Sexton. I believe; Dr. Witherbee is at your service."

When I awoke to consciousness some one was alternately snapping his fingers in my face and roughly shaking me. I was in pitchy darkness, and the air was chill and clammy.

"Sexton, I'm ashamed of you," said Clarke's voice through the gloom. "You are a particularly easy subject. I should have given you some lessons in resistance."

"Where are we? What has happened? Where is Dudley?" I asked, in a breath.

"Dudley is here. He recovered before you did," answered Clarke, a fact which Dudley's voice confirmed. "We seem to be in some sort of an oubliette, of that dear Dr. Witherbee."

In single file we made the round of our dungeon. We found it to be about 15 feet square, walled with masonry which dripped dampness, and floored with wet cement. On one side we came upon

a door the height of my head, I being the tallest of the party. From the rivet heads we judged it to be of plate steel and it closed into a steel frame set into the masonry in a manner which offered no entrance for the point of a pick had we one at hand. The absence of any keyhole, bolt or lever showed that it was never intended to be opened from the inside.

At last, after a wait which seemed an eternity, I heard a soft footfall outside of the door. Then iron bars clanked and grated. I heard the hinges creak and the door swung slowly open. A dark form framed in the doorway was outlined through the gloom. Then it stepped into our midst. My hands shot to his throat, which was cold and clammy as that of a corpse. There was no resistance. I heard Dudley wrenching the lantern from his belt. At Clarke's command I released him. Dudley was about to strike the light when Clarke shouted: "Quiet, Dudley; the door!"

We emerged on the rugged side of a hill overlooking the broad expanse of the bay.

Lying flat on my back on the sand, my heart tugging and thumping, my

breath coming in rasping gasps which seemed to sear my throat, I waited, I knew not how long.

At last I was aroused by a soft "hello," and the nose of a swift gasoline launch shot into the creek.

We had not long to wait. Clarke lifted his eyes from his intent watch on the shore line and said: "He's coming."

I knew who "he" meant and I shivered at meeting Witherbee on those black waters. Then my ear caught the "puff-puff" of a launch.

"Down in the boat, fellows, he's going to fire," shouted Clarke. Dudley and I dropped. Six times in rapid succession his revolver cracked. But a swiftly flying launch is not easy to hit and we heard the bullets whistle overhead.

Withersbee's boat was almost upon us when Clarke gave the wheel a quick twist and our pursuer shot past within three feet of our gunwale. As he threw the wheel Clarke's right arm shot into the basket at his side. I saw his hand come out holding a writing black object. He swung it about his head once and let go. I saw it hurtle through the air and strike the doctor full between the shoulders. Witherbee dropped the wheel and stood up trying to fight the thing off while his boat, free of her helm, swung round in circles.

Suddenly he sprang to the gunwale of the boat, threw up his arms and with a piercing, terrified shriek disappeared in the black waters of the bay. Clarke shot our boat over to the staggering derelict, reached over her side and stopped her engine. I held the gunwale together while Dudley leaped into the doctor's boat at a bound and returned bearing in his powerful arms the unconscious form of a young woman. The figure in the stern sat fixed and motionless.

Dudley swiftly cut the ropes which bound her. "It's she. It's she," he muttered. Clarke felt her pulse. "She's only fainted," he said. We fell to chafing her wrists and Dudley scooped up a handful of sea water and bathed her brow.

At the tavern, after Miss Mason had been safely stowed away in a clean warm bed by the motherly landlady we patched together the ragged threads of the story over the best in the landlord's cellar.

"First," said Clarke, "if you are Oliver Dike, whose was the body that Dr. Witherbee shipped to Chicago in an opium case?"

"He was another attendant, a young fellow by the name of Frank Williams. We were very similar in appearance even to the fillings in our teeth."

"I didn't worry much about her for he treated her well and she seemed to be in no danger from him, and I had seen so many terrible things in cases where he didn't want to marry them that I was sort of hardened to it anyway. I was the watchman of the whole place after Williams disappeared and the only white man on the institution, all the rest being Chinks. I talked with Miss Mason on the sly sometimes but I paid no attention to her appeals until one day she mentioned the name of Mr. Dudley here. He was one of my boyhood football heroes and I determined to do something."

"But, Clarke, how did you see through all this when we were in Chicago?" I asked.

"I didn't see through it by any means. Only I saw some things which you didn't. Part of it you know. Then a connecting link was the zinc case which I recognized at once as one used in smuggling opium. I picked up the threads of Miss Mason's case where I had dropped them before, and the list of guests confirmed my hazy recollection that there was one from Etteso. The name of the town did not strike me the first time, of course, but the name of the doctor did, for while turning the case over in my mind I thought of some thing which I should have remembered the first time. It was that once in a Clark street opium den I had heard the name 'Withersbee' in a cautious whisper. My visit to Chinatown confirmed this. I have a Chinaman there that I depend on a good deal, and in reply to my question of who was the greatest dealer in smuggled opium in the country he whispered 'Withersbee,' swearing that he would never live to see another day for having told."

Dudley and Miss Mason were married the next spring and Clarke and I are often guests at their beautiful Lake Forest home. Witherbee's so called asylum, from which, aided by the powerful Chinese tongs in which he wielded great influence, he conducted his extensive smuggling operations, now atones for its past sins as one of the principal outposts in the war against "The Great White Plague."

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NOTES FROM MEADOWBROOK FARM By William Pitt



Push the fattening pigs to market condition.

Feed green bone if you would get best results from your flock.

Best results in fattening hogs are obtained where the basis of the ration is corn.

Is your hog pen filthy because of improper drainage. Remedy the defect at once.

Ease the burdens of the wife by cleaning your boots thoroughly before entering the house.

Part of the winter leisure ought to be used for the repairing and painting of the farm machinery.

If you cannot get a stand of alfalfa grow red clover or blue grass, as pasture for your hogs.

Remember, the best seed is none too good. It is a losing game to labor over seed of low germinating power.

Begin a course of reading for the winter months which will better equip you for the farm work next season.

You need grit and so do the hens. The right kind of grit in your mill will make it certain that the right kind of grit gets into the hens.

While sheep are growing wool and making mutton for you they are cleaning the fields of weeds and spreading valuable manure over the land.

Study your flock so as to know which are your best birds. Then use the selected stock for breeding purposes next spring and thus build up your flock in quality.

The sheep that are left to fill up on the frost-bitten, snow-covered pasture will not thrive, you may be sure. Give hay and grain ration if you want to make your flock profit earners.

In feeding growing stock remember that there is need of a constantly increasing ration. They need food to build the larger frame and they need food to supply the daily bodily needs.

When the ground is well frozen cover the strawberry beds with straw, leaves or corncobs. The object of covering after the ground is frozen is to prevent alternate thawing and freezing.

The right treatment will remove ring bone on young horses. If the animal walks on the toe use a high-heeled shoe. When inflammation is active adopt soothing measures, and then severe blistering or even firing may be resorted to.

The form of the skull of the hog depends on nutrition, health and the employment of the muscles of the head and neck in rooting. Where hogs are well nourished, their skulls are rounder and firmer than in the case of hogs poorly nourished. Rooting helps to develop a longer skull and snout.

It is claimed by a French naturalist that if the world should become birdless, man could not inhabit it after nine years' time, in spite of all the sprays and poisons that could be manufactured for the destruction of insects. The insects and slugs would simply eat all the orchards and crops in that time.

Dried refuse from tomato canneries analyzed by the Ontario experiment station shows a content of 2.54 per cent. nitrogen, 2.28 per cent. phosphoric acid and 0.64 per cent. potash. Assuming 75 per cent. of moisture for the material as it leaves the factory, the amounts would be: Nitrogen, 0.64 per cent., phosphoric acid 0.82 per cent. and potash 0.16 per cent., a composition comparing favorably with that of barnyard manure.

Dairy farmers will watch with interest the joint investigations of the Wisconsin and Illinois experiment stations on tuberculosis cows. The work of either station will serve as a check on that of the other, inasmuch as the experiments at Madison will be similar to those at Urbana. The bacteriologists of the two stations will be in charge of the work. Inasmuch as Illinois and Wisconsin are the two greatest dairy states in the country, the co-operation of these two stations will be of great significance in the new movement to eradicate tuberculosis from the herds of the country.

Here is a move in the right direction. It is nothing else than a proposal on the part of the Kansas experiment station to begin a study of boys and girls. As Prof. McKeever puts it: "If a farmer has a horse that balks in the harness or a cow that acts queerly and runs off the reservation he can write to the nearest government experiment station and secure a printed bulletins or a letter on the subject from a high-salaried expert, but if the refractory creature chances to be his 16-year-old son or his feuding daughter he has no recourse other than to fight the case out alone, assisted perhaps only by a despairing wife." Ten or more bulletins will be issued dealing with the best way to handle this "best crop on the farm."

If you are troubled with straw worm or joint-worm, the surest way of dealing with the pest is to destroy both stubble and straw. The stubble may be burned, or plowed under so deeply and carefully that none will be left sticking out to form passageways for the adults when they come forth the following spring. The straw may be destroyed by fire, or by any other convenient method. Inasmuch as the joint-worm is known to inhabit grasses such as frequently grow in the fence rows about the edges of the wheat fields, and as our studies would indicate that some individuals of the wheat straw-worm may have a similar habit, it would be well to burn or otherwise destroy the grasses along the fences before next spring. If both Hessian fly and straw-worm be present, the grower has but to destroy stubble, straw and grass along fences, and to practice late sowing, to avoid serious injury from either pest.

IN A TIME OF DROUGHT

Veracious Chronicler's Description of Some Devices Employed.

Unusual expedients are being adopted by the farmers near here to get enough water to keep their cattle alive. Wells are dry and even the distillers have been forced to suspend, a thing unheard of in the history of the country.

Simply to illustrate the condition

bushels of strong onions. The onions forced tears from the eyes of the potatoes, and in a few hours he had an ample supply of water. This plan is being adopted generally.

Using the idea, with a slight variation, Josephus Warren, the emotional novelist, is reading a few touching poems to the rocks, and they are gushing forth a bounteous supply of tears, also.

Other farmers are employing marine artists to draw water.—Fisshigh (Pa.)

Correspondence Philadelphia North American.

The five-year-old son of the Rev. Stephen S. Wise was driving up Fifth avenue, New York, recently with his mother. As they approached the entrance to Central park she called his attention to Saint Gauden's famous work, the equestrian statue of Gen. Sherman led by Victory. "But, mamma," he queried, "why does not the gentleman get off his horse and let the lady ride?"

Demarcation.

Madge—Why do you worry about being as brown as a berry?

Dolly—I'm afraid my neck isn't tanned quite low enough to meet my gowns.—Puck.

Not Gregarious.

"Is Grouch a clubman?"

"No. The only thing he is a member of is the human race, and he's not in very good standing with that."—Judge.