The Unspeakable Turk

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

John Curtis, a young American, who chances to be in Athens at the outbreak of the Greco-Turkish war, joins a filibustering expedition to Crete. The little vessel is wrecked, but Curtis, accompanied by Lieutenant Lindbohm, a soldier of fortune, and a native Cretan, Michali, reach the island safely. They arrive at a village and are cared for by the inhabitants. Curtis has injured his foot on a sea urchin. He is nursed by Panayota, the priest's daughter. In a few days word comes of the advance of the Turks under Kostakes toward the town. The Cretans gather in the pass, the men fighting, and the women and girls keeping up up beacon fires. Thirty Turks are killed, but Michali is badly wounded and Panayota is captured by Kostakes. The Cretans retreat to the sea. Kostakes plunders the town, taking the old priest and Panayota along as prisoners. Curtis, representing himself as a newspaper correspondent, also accompanies the Turks. Kostakes has the old priest murdered and Curtis plans to rescue Panayota and avenge her father's death. In the absence of Kostakes, Curtis kills two of the guards and wounds another, and escapes with Panayota. They meet Lindbohm and friends, and attack the Bashi Bazouks, who recapture Panayota.

CHAPTER XXII.

Curtis sat down upon the edge of the water basin. There was a faint smell of powder in the air. He heard a shot now and again in the distance, but growing fewer. A bugle sounded. Fortunately, no more of the Bashi Bazouks passed through the square.

"Gone!" said Curtis; "Gone!"

The Greeks began to come in, talking excitedly and gesticulating like madmen. They seemed to be in high spirits. They gathered about Curtis, and, pointing at the dead bodies, all talked at once. They enraged him. He could hardly resist the desire to jump up and lay about them with the butt of his musket. Lindbohm pushed his way through the crowd. Hold his gun in his left hand, he brought the right to his forehead, saluting gayly with the imaginary sword.

"Well, my friend, we had a little fun with them, didn't we? The ambush, however, would have been more of a success had the men obeyed my orders. If I had my way, I would just shoot a soldier who disobeyed orders. Still, we taught 'em a lesson. We have killed, let me see how many, one, two, three—"

"Hell!" cried Curtis, rising suddenly; "Hell, I say!"

"What!" said Lindbohm, turning upon him, "what's the matter?"

"She's gone."

Lindbohm clutched at the shoulder of a by-standing insurgent.

"Panayota?" he gasped.

"Huh! Where were you? Eh? Where were you? Here they came seven of 'em, right down here, and the girl and I all alone. What could I do, one against seven? You're a healthy soldier, you are—scatter all over the country! Lindbohm, you're to blame for this. You've got to answer to 'em—somebody's got to settle for this." Flinging his rifle down among the stones, he turned his back contemptuously and limped toward one of the houses. A kindly insurgent sprang to his assistance.

"Right up through there they went, carrying her with them. Four men could have stopped 'em. Where were you, damn you?" and pushing the insurgent from him, he shook his fist in his face. "Get out of my sight, get out!"

Lindbohm was sitting on the side of the basin, his face buried in his hands. He was sobbing and talking to himself in Swedish. Those who stood near heard the word "Panayota" frequently. Reason returned to Curtis as speedily as he had lost it. His blind rage passed away, and in its place came a resolve to recover Panayota and to settle with Kostakes according to the present debt and all that might accrue. The spirit of Crete had taken thorough possession of him. He had been wronged by the Turk; he lived only for vengeance. His eye fell upon a Cretan in the act of pulling a boot from a dead Turk's foot. He was tugging with all his might. All at once he flew over backwards with the boot in his hands. His comrades broke into laughter. Lindbohm did not look up.

"They don't feel this thing about Panayota as badly as Lindbohm and I do," soliloquized Curtis. "Poor old Lindbohm! I'll tell him I'm in love with Panayota, and then he'll see how foolish it is for him to take on so. He ought to stand it if I can."

The insurgent detached the other boot, and brought the pair to him.

"Will those fit?" he asked. "Good boots."

Curtis took the boots and went over to the drinking fountain. He patted Lindbohm on the back. "Cheer up, old man," he said. "They can't get away from us. There's another day coming."

It was impossible to get the boot upon the sore foot, so one of the insurgents cut it off at the ankle and slit it down nearly to the toe. Then he punched a number of holes, and Curtis was able, by means of a string, to lace on this improvised shoe. As the leather was soft, it proved quite comfortable. Lindbohm staggered to his feet, stretched like a man awakening from sleep, and ran his finger through the blond pompadour that rose precipitously from his forehead.

"That's right, old man, said Curtis; we must brace up. Of course you feel bad because we sort of fumbled the thing. But consider what my feelings must be. Lindbohm I love that girl."

The Swede started violently.

"You have made court to her?" he asked.

"Why, I told her that I loved her—yes, yes, several times."

"You have made love to her?" he asked.

"And, pardon me, she said that she loved you?"

"Now that you ask me I don't believe she did. No she didn't. But I didn't have much time, you see."

Lindbohm held out his big, soft hand, and Curtis grasped it.

"We will not turn back," he said, "we will find Panayota. And if Kostakes has insulted her we will punish him, though he flee to the ends of the earth."

"Old man, you're a friend worth having," cried Curtis, wringing the hand which he held. "I'll never forget this till the last day of my life."

One of the insurgents, a former resident of Canea, spoke considerable French. It was through the medium of this man that Lindbohm had communicated with his troop thus far. He called him now and told him to get the men together, as they must march. He feared lest Kostakes, surmising the smallness of their numbers, might return to the attack.

So they set forth in the moonlight, taking with them the arms and other spoils of the dead Turks, of whom the number proved to be eight. Their plan was to conceal themselves somewhere in the fields and get some sleep. But half a mile out of Galata they encountered a band of 50 Cretan insurgents, young men of the region, armed to the teeth, and thirsting for vengeance. These, learning that Lindbohm was a foreign officer of approved mettle, put themselves also under his leadership. Thus reinforced he returned and camped in Galata. The next morning he pushed on vigorously after Kostakes—a pursuit that was destined to last several weeks, and that was prosecuted with a continually increasing band. Several encounters took place, and three Turkish villages were destroyed, by way of reprisal. They did not succeed in capturing Kostakes, but two wounded Turks that fell into their hands at different times, told them that Panayota was in his camp.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Turkish woman, closely veiled and carrying a black umbrella, was walking along the Spiadjia, or principal street of Canea. A nondescript urchin, barefooted, in Cretan breeches, with a tuft of black hair shooting straight up through a rent in his straw hat, followed with a string of red mullets and a sheaf of Italian lettuce. As the mysterious woman passed the little group of men sitting under the awnings, or in the doorways of the shops, they turned their heads discreetly to one side, not even casting a furtive glance at the dainty, embroidered slippers, that now and then peeped out from under the black robe. Turning down a narrow street, she tiptoed along beneath the projecting upper stories of the houses, with that motion peculiar to women whose slippers are so constructed that they fall off if the toe is not shoved into them at every successive step. Stopping for a moment, she drew a handkerchief from her bosom, and, passing it under her veil, wiped her face.

"Phew!" she said, "it's hot." Then, raising her head, she sniffed the air sharply, eagerly.

"Allah be praised!" she exclaimed. "I believe that Ayesha is roasting coffee."

The thought accelerated her footsteps to such an extent that the rapid sliding of her slippers on the path sounded like the preparatory steps of a jig dancer in the sand box.

"Yes, that's from our court, sure. I do hope it's nearly ready to grind. What's so delicious as a fresh cup of coffee and a glass of cold water when one is hot and thirsty?"

The aroma certainly proceeded from a garden which the Turkish woman was now approaching, and, as she arrived at the massive gate in the high adobe wall, the sound of a coffee roaster in motion could plainly be heard within. Souleima gave the boy a penny, whereupon he set up such a loud and voluble protest that she was obliged to give him five paras more, with a threat to open the gate and let out an imaginary dog of fearful biting powers if he did not instantly depart. The boy out of the way, Souleima knocked upon the door and cried:

"Ayesha, Ferende! let me in," she cried.

"Go open the gate, it's Souleima," said a voice within.

"Go yourself. When did I become a door-opener?"

"Bah! Don't you see I can't leave the coffee? It'll burn."

The sound of a rattling chain, and a woman peeped out, holding a black veil over the lower part of her face. Souleima entered, shutting and locking the gate after her.

"Whew!" she exclaimed, pulling off her veil with the finger and thumb of the hand that now held the sheaf of lettuce.

"It's hot outside. You two ought to be thankful to me, running around in the sun for you, while you sit here in the cool shade."

"Very cool it is here by this fire," retorted Ayesha. "It's Ferende who is the lady these days. Never mind, my girl, when Panayota comes to her senses you will have to work like your betters. You're getting fat, too, and Kostakes is tired of fat women. Isn't she getting fat, my Souleima?"

The lady appealed to made no reply, but, going over to the water faucet that projected from a marble slab built into one side of the wall, hung the string of fish from the iron cock and laid the lettuce in the shallow stone basin beneath. Then she turned on a thin stream of cold water. As the reader has doubtless divined ere this, we are now in the harem of Kostakes Effendi.

His wife, Souleima, had just been to market; Ayesha is browning coffee and Ferende is sitting on the doorstep, looking insolently and lazily on. Ayesha and Souleima are about of an age—30. They are both fat, dark and greasy, with black eyes and black hair. Their lips are thick, and their teeth not too good. Their complexions are muddy, and their faces somewhat pimpled, from too little exercise and too much greasy food, sweetmeats and black coffee. Ferende is a strapping Albanian girl, about Panayota's age, though of coarser build. Like the beautiful Greek who is under lock and key up-stairs, she has soft brown hair and brown eyes, set wide apart in her head.

It is easy to see that things are not running smoothly in Kostakes' harem, and the reason is this: Up till quite recently, Ferende has been the favorite, and the two elder wives have been little more than her servants. The appearance of Panayota has led them to believe that a new mistress will soon be established in the household, and they are looking forward with great delight to the degradation of Ferende. The latter, fearing her own downfall, has not openly declared war against her two associates, but is racking her brain night and day in search of some method by which to enlist them with her against Panayota.

Ayesha now sits with her bare feet crossed under her, upon a rug spread on the earthen floor of the court. Before her is a charcoal fire, suspended over which, on two crotches driven into the ground, is a thing like a section of stove-pipe, closed at the ends. An iron rod, running lengthwise of this contrivance, rests upon the crotches and is bent at one extremity into a crank.

Souleima removes her outer garments and appears arrayed like her sisters, in baggy breeches drawn tight around the ankles, and a loose-fitting shirt. She kicks off her slippers and walks in her stockinged feet to the coffee-roaster.

"Is it ready yet, Ayesha?" she asks, opening a little door on one side of the cylinder, and letting out a great black cloud of aroma.

"Can I take out enough for one little cup?"

"You might find enough for two while you are about it."

"Yes, even for three. Poor Ferende! She will have to grind her own coffee, and Panayota's, too."

Souleima produced a wooden spoon from the drawer of a pine table standing beneath the garden's one mulberry tree, and dipped a quantity of the brown smoking berries into one of those cylindrical brass mills which are sold by wandering gypsies to the housewives of the Orient. Sitting on the table's edge, she grasped the mill with her left hand and firmly imbedded one end of it in the fat of her corpulescent stomach, while she turned the tiny crank with her right.

The ladies of Kostakes' household could converse or carry on their domestic avocations without fear of intruding eyes. The wall was very high, and the one house near enough to overlook it had no windows on that side. A pleasant place was that inclosure, albeit two long, shallow rectangular tubs leaned against the wall of the house, taking the place of the legendary guitar. They were washtubs, and upon them Ayesha and Souleima from time to time played the stern music of necessity. A huge copper kettle, with a very black bottom, stood near, another adjunct of the home laundry. In the middle of the court was a stone basin, into which water ran through a tiny channel from the hydrant in the wall.

"Na!" said Souleima, unscrewing the top of the mill and looking inside, "that will be enough, I think. We'll have a cup of coffee first, and then some dinner out there under the tree. Look at those fish. Did you ever see finer barbounia? What do you think I paid an oke for them?"

"Ninety parades," suggested Ayesha.

"Only 60. I bought them of a Greek. Ferende, clean them—that's a good girl—while I make a cup of coffee."

"Clean them yourself. I shall tell the Effendi of these insults when he comes, and he will make it hot for you."

"Poor Ferende!" cackled Souleima. "He will take off those silk trousers and put them on Panayota. But you shouldn't complain now that your turn has come. Better people than you have been through the same thing."

"If you ever went through it," snapped Ferende, "it was so long ago you can't remember it." And, rising disdainfully, she walked into the house. Souleima raised the coffee mill as though to hurl it after her, and then, thinking better of the act, let her hand fall by her side.

"Maybe she'll be able to warn Kostakes over again," she reflected aloud.

"I don't believe it," replied Ayesha, "He's crazy about this Greek. I never saw him like this before."

"Then why doesn't he—"

"I don't know. Perhaps he wants the girl to love him."

"Bah! She'll love him fast enough after he breaks her spirit."

Souleima filled a long-handled brass dipper from the hydrant and put into the water the coffee, ground fine as dust, together with four teaspoonfuls of sugar. Then, screening her face with her left hand, she kneeled in front of the fire and held the dipper in the coals until its contents boiled over. Ayesha lifted the smoking cylinder from the crotches and, shaking it violently for a moment, set it up against the side of the house.

"Shall I bring two cups or three?" she called from the door of the kitchen.

"Only two. Let Ferende make her own coffee."

"Hadn't I better call her?"

"You'll only get insulted if you do. The nasty cat!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Panayota was walking to and fro in a room whose one window looked straight against the blank wall of a house not 10 feet distant. A grating of iron bars prevented her escape in that direction, and the door was locked. She was very pale and there were deep circles under her eyes. She was muttering as one distrait. Occasionally she raised her eyes and hands to heaven.

"Dear little Virgin, all holy one, save me from this infamy, from the pollution of the Turk. Save me in any way, help me to escape or to die!"

After each prayer she stood listening, as though waiting for an immediate response—some miraculous intervention in her behalf. Often seized by utter despair, she sank her fingers deep into her thick brown locks, and cried:

"No help, no help. O God! O God!"

At every sound of a footstep without, or of any commotion in the court below, her pale face grew paler, and she trembled with fear and revulsion. She was expecting Kostakes. For a week now the girl had been shut up in this manner. Kostakes had left her in the care of his harem, with stern commands that she be kindly treated and all her wants supplied. Ayesha and Souleima had derived much pleasure from attending upon Panayota, as though she were indeed a member of the harem and their lord's favorite; for thus they caused Ferende, whom they cordially hated, much unhappiness. It seemed to Panayota that she had been in captivity an age. For the first three or four days she had hoped for a rescue by Lindbohm and Curtis and their band of insurgents. Time and again the wild scenes which she had witnessed passed through her mind as she stood with hands clasped and eyes half closed in the middle of the floor. She saw again the impetuous Swede chasing Ampates out of town because the scoundrel had wished to give her up; she saw Curtis standing before her with his smoking rifle, while the fallen Turk, his features still twitching in the death agony, lay at her feet.

But as the days passed and no help came, her keen hope faded into the blackness of despair.

"They cannot find me," she moaned; "perhaps they're dead. Perhaps they think I have yielded to the Turk, and they despise me. Do they not know that I would die first?" Whenever she thought of death, her mind involuntarily sought for some method by which she could accomplish it, if worst came to worst. To hold her breath, to plunge her head against the side of the wall, to strangle herself with a strip torn from her bed clothing, all these ideas suggested themselves. And as often as she thought of self-destruction there rose to memory a slender white shaft that had frequently been pointed out to her in childhood. For there had once been a suicide in her native village, and the body had been buried in a lonely place on a hill, far away from the holy comradeship, the blessed crosses and the benediction of God's acre. This isolated tomb had made a great impression on her childish mind. She and the other children had always crossed themselves when they saw it, and they never mentioned the dead man's name. It seemed a terrible thing not to be buried in consecrated ground.

CHAPTER XXV.

"I wonder if that Greek will come to her senses and supplant me?" mused Ferende. "If she keeps on at her present rate, Kostakes will soon get over his infatuation. Lord! But she's growing ugly, with that sallow complexion and those big black marks under her eyes. She never saw the day she was half as beautiful as I am."

Going to Panayota's room, she took down the key that was hanging outside the door and went in. Locking the door on the inside, she stood for a moment looking at the girl, who sat on the side of the bed, her face hurled in her hands. Panayota glanced up when Ferende first entered, and then took no further notice of her visitor. She knew that this was the favorite, although Ferende, consulting her dignity, had had little to say to her.

"Panayota," very sweetly, "I am your friend. I, too, am a Greek, and was brought up in the Greek religion, but the Turks killed my father and mother and took me away when I was very young. I cannot help being what I am, but if I were in your place I would let them kill me before they should turn me into a Turk. And you a priest's daughter, too!"

The woman spoke Greek with a native accent. A sudden wild hope thrilled Panayota's bosom. She sprang to her feet and ran toward Ferende with arms outstretched.

"The Holy Virgin bless you! So you have come to set me free?"

Now Ferende could not do this, however much she would have liked to. Could Ayesha and Souleima once fix upon her the blams of having disobeyed a command of their common husband, no subsequent wiles could save her from complete degredation.

"Oh, I dare not set you free now," she faltered, somewhat embarrassed by the suddenness of the demand. "but—"

"Then save me, holy Virgin!" cried Panayota, the bright gleam of hope dying within her, leaving her soul darker than before. "There is no other help for me. Aren't you ashamed, coming here to mock me? What else do I want except to get out of this place—this brothel? You say you are a Greek, and I believe you are, from your accent. But what could I expect from you? You are worse than a Turk, for their women believe at least that they are honestly married. But you—bah! You are a common thing!"

"AYESHA, FERENDE! LET ME IN," SHE CRIED.

Ferende winced under this torrent of abuse, but there was a certain point which she wished to make sure.

"You talk very bravely now, my lady," she replied. "Many Greek girls have talked like that before. But after Kostakes has had his way with you by force, then what will you do? No Greek will want you then, and there will be nothing for you to do except to become one of us. It's easy enough for a girl to remain Christian as long as she can save her honor, but after that is gone the Christians are more cruel than the Turks. Then th eonly way to remain respectable is to turn Turk."

"I swear to you by the soul of my father, whom Kostakes murdered, that I will die before I will yield," cried Panayota.

Ferende with difficulty suppressed an exclamation of joy. Simulating a sorrow which she was far from feeling, she land her hand on Panayota's shoulder and murmured.

"Did Kostakes kill your father? Forgive me, Panayota, for speaking so harshly, but you were very hard on me. Now we can sympathize with each other. Indeed. Both my parents were murdered by the Turks. I must go now, but remember I am your friend. Hold out against Kostakes and I will find some way to help you."

She turned to leave the room, but Panayota caught her by the sleeve.

"Help me to escape from here," she sobbed. "I beg of you in the name of your Christian mother, and I will pray the virgin every night to bless you."

Ferende locked the door behind her and hung up the key.

"Kostakes will never have much fun with her," she soliloquized, and she went down stairs humming a popular Greek song.

Finding Ayesha and Souleima still in the court, exchanging gallant confidences, she strolled up to them with the insolent air of a queen.

"Get up, you women," she said, "and prepare dinner."

Poor Ayesha and Souleima looked inquiringly into each other's eyes. Thus was Ferende wont to act after some special mark of Kostakes' favor had inflated her confidence. They arose slowly. The favorite jerked away the rug and spread it in an attractive nook of shade beneath the mulberry tree. Sitting upon it she removed her gold embroidered slippers and crossed her stockinged feet beneath her. As the two older wives glanced at her, their hearts sank within them. She certainly did not have the appearance of a deposed queen. Her eyes, recently treated with belladonna, had a melting, lustrous look, suggestive of passion. The little touch of henna under the lower fringe of lashes added a slight look of abandon. Her trousers of magenta silk, and her sleeveless purple jacket embroidered with gold thread, were immaculate, save for a loose hair or two, or a speck of dust, which she removed with dainty finger tips. Twisted carelessly about her waist, with knotted ends hanging loosely at one side, was a broad sash with yellow and magenta stripes. Passing her hand beneath this, she extracted a silver cigarette case. Putting a brown cigarette no larger in diameter than a slate pencil, one of the sort that is two-thirds paper tube and one-third tobacco, into her mouth, she called out lazily between her closed teeth.

"Ayesha, bring a match and light my cigarette," and Ayesha, with a muttered Moslem imprecation, obeyed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Alas, for human greatness! A horseman trotting along the stony street, drew up in front of the gate with a sudden cessation of the jingling of a saber and the rattling of trappings. Two musket butts struck the ground almost simultaneously, as the two sentries at the gate finished their salute. Ayesha dropped the fish which she was cleaning at the hydrant, wiped her hands upon her dirty apron and tore it from her waist. Souleima set a little pile of dishes upon the table and tried to pat her straggling hair into place. A heavy hand, supplemented by a cavalry boot, shook the gate till the fastenings rattled.

"Merciful Allah, the Effendi!" screamed Ayesha and Souleima under their breath, and they both rushed to the gate. But they were too good Turks to open without inquiring sweetly:

"Who is it?"

"It's I—Kostakes. Open the gate before I kick it down!"

"He's mad," whispered Souleima, undoing the fastenings.

Kostakes paid no attention to the low salaams of his two wives. He strode into the middle of the garden, and, plucking off his sword, cried fiercely:

"Here, some of you lazy women, take my sword! Ayesha, bring me a chair. Souleima, fetch my slippers."

He sank into the proffered chair with a sigh of satisfaction. The Effendi had been riding hard, and was evidently tired. He was uncomfortable, too, and needed a bath and grooming. A prickly black beard had grown upon his square chin, and perspiration had made little watercourses in the dust upon his dark-brown cheeks. He laid his right foot upon his left knee, slapped his hands side by side upon the high boot tops, and swept the court with inquiring eye.

"Barbounia, eh?" he inquired of Ayesha, as his glance fell upon the string of half-cleaned mullets.

"Yes, Effendi."

"Are they fresh, eh? Are they fresh?"

"Fresh, Effendi? They are alive!"

"Brava! brava!" There was a softer note to his voice. "Well, get 'em ready. I haven't had anything to eat in 12 hours."

"Yes, Effendi, immediately, Effendi."

Ayesha trotted over to the hydrant and began scaling the mullets with commendable zeal.

"How long before dinner will be ready?" Kostakes called after her.

"About 20 minutes, Effendi."

"Call me as soon as it's ready. I shall be up in Panayota's room."

(To be continued.)

"THE HOLY VIRGIN BLESS YOU! SO YOU HAVE COME TO SET ME FREE!"

Child Growth.

The laws of child growth are curious. Boys do more growing in the 17th than in any other year; girls in the 14th. Girls usually reach their full height at 15; boys at 18 or 19.

From the 11th to the 16th year the average girl is bigger and stronger than the average boy. She can't do the same "stunts," but that's only because she isn't in training. She has the muscle all right.

From November to April children grow very little. From April to July they gain in height most rapidly. From July to November they gain in weight. In hot countries children of both sexes mature much more quickly. The Winter cold seems to retard the growth of children just as it does of plants.

FUN OF THE PARAGRAPHERS

Things to Make You Laugh or Cry, as Case May Be.

"It is awfully crowded here."

"Why, Harry, you forget; we have nice little paths in every room, and we don't have to climb on the bed to get things out of the bureau as we did in that other flat."—Chicago Record.

Schoolteacher—What little boy can tell me where is the home of the swallow?

Bobby—I kin, please.

Schoolteacher—Well, Bobby?

Bobby—The home of the swallow is the stummick.—Tit-Bits.

The late Canon Lyttelton, of Gloucester, when rector of Hagley, was fond of scientific teaching, and formed a class in his school for physiology. After a few lectures he received a letter from the mother of one of his pupils, saying: "Reverend sir—Please not to teach Susan anything more about her inside; it makes her proud."—Exchange.

She—Dear, what are the wild waves saying?

He—They haven't been able to get a word in since you arrived.—New York World.

"William is always used up for several days after ma starts for California."

"How does that happen?"

"Oh, he always has to go over her railway map with her, and tell her what to do and what not to do."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

One of the baffling mysteries of Nature is the pie that melts in the mouth, but feels solider than a brick in the stomach.—Detroit Journal.

The watering-carts of a certain Irish town are decorated with patent medicine advertisements. An innocent Irishman from the rural districts looked at one the other day and remarked: "Faith, it's no wonder D—— is healthy, when they water the streets with Jones' sarsaparilla!"—San Francisco Argonaut.

Ethel—That detestable Mrs. Bloom said that I looked 30.

Maud—How perfectly absurd!

Ethel (elated)—Frankly, now, how old do you really think I look?

Maud—About 40.—Tit-Bits.

"Constant effort, you know, is always sure to bring success."

"Don't you believe it. I've been tryin' for 10 years to get upstairs, after comin' home from the lodge, without lettin' my wife hear me, but I ain't done it yet, and I don't expect to at my time o' life."—Chicago Times-Herald.

"Maggie, did you make that chicken broth?"

"Oi did, mum."

"I can't find it anywhere about; what did you do with it?"

"Sure, an' that ilse would Oi do wid it but fade it to the chickens, mum?"—Answers.

"Now, my noble steed," cried the poet, looking at his spurs to see if they were on straight and grasping the reins more firmly, "call thy justly celebrated wings to thy aid. We are about to undertake a lofty flight into the realms of poesy, and will attempt to imitate the style of Alfred Austin, Poet Laureate of Eng—"

But at this point Pegasus bucked desperately and threw him.—Chicago Tribune.

"She has been talking about writing a novel for years," said one woman.

"Yes," answered the other. "But I don't think she'll ever get it completed. She has followed the plan of those authors who study their personal acquaintances for types of character."

"Isn't the method a good one?"

"Not in her case. When her husband refuses her anything she wants to put him in as the villain, and when he does as she wishes she wants to make him the hero. It keeps her continually rewriting the first chapter."—Washington Star.

"You are late tonight, dear," said his wife, as he came in at 11:20 P. M.

"Yes," replied the literary editor of the Morning Thunderbolt, dropping into a chair. "I had to remain at the office long enough to revise my proofs and see that the printers did not change the word 'suppositious,' in one of my articles, to 'suppositious.'"

For, of all callings, literature is the most exacting.—Chicago Tribune.

"Literature is fascinating," said the author who had gotten off the train in search of character studies; "but it is exacting. I suspect that it shortens a man's life."

"I'm dead sure of it," answered Broncho Bob. "One time a feller came up here an' made up some literature about Crimson Gulch. An' he didn't live two days after it."—Washington Star.

"I understand that Englishwoman's book is very clever."

"Oh, yes; even the servants in it talk epigram."—Indianapolis Journal.

"But, papa," said the maiden, "he bids fair to become a writer of note."

"Yes," answered the old man, "and the other fellow is already a writer of checks."

As to the one she ultimately chose, the gentle reader can easily decide—one way or the other. It all depends on the age of the gentle reader.—Indianapolis Press.

"I wish I knew what woman wrote this book."

"How do you know a woman wrote it at all?"

"Its style is so hideously masculine."—Chicago Tribune.

Mr. Talkso—Yes, I am very sensitive about my feet.

Mr. Sourdrop—What do you do? Wear tight shoes or write poetry?—Baltimore American.

Writer—But you promised me regular rates. There were over 3000 words in that article.

Publisher—Yes, I know, but there were so many words repeated again and again. There is the word "and," for instance, occurring in the first page no less than 75 times.—Collier's Weekly.

"If you love him and he loves you," they urged, "why not marry him in spite of your father's objections?"

"Papa would not support me if I married against his wishes," replied she.

"But cannot your sweetheart support you when you are married?"

"He is a poet."—Detroit Free Press.

"That story would be good if it were not for one thing."

"What is that?"

"It isn't."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed the first microbe, "you look fierce."

"Don't I?" replied the crippled one. "I deserve a pension. The Philippine war's responsible for my condition."

"Oh, come off!"

"Fact. I got mixed up in a kiss between a returned soldier and his best girl."—San Francisco Examiner.

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ANDERSON, GUSTAV, Attorney-at-Law....613
ASSOCIATED PRESS; E. L. Powell, Mgr....506
AUSTEN, F. C., Manager for Oregon and Washington Bankers' Life Association, of Des Moines, Ia.....502-503
BANKERS' LIFE ASSOCIATION, OF DES MOINES, IA.; F. C. Austen, Manager.502-503
BAYNTUN, GEO. R., Mgr. for Chas. Scribner's Sons.....518
BEALS, EDWARD A., Forecast Official U. S. Weather Bureau.....919
BENJAMIN, R. W., Dentist.....314
BISSWANGER, DR. G. S., Phys. & Sur.410-411
BROOKE, DR. J. M., Phys. & Surg.....708-709
BROWN, MYRA, M. D.....813-814
BRUERE, DR. G. E., Physician....412-413-414
BUSHNELL, RICHARD, Agent Wilson & McCallay Tobacco Co.....502-503
CAUKIN, G. E., District Agent Travelers' Insurance Co.....718
CARDWELL, DR. J. R.....504
CARDWELL, W. T., Special Agent Mutual Reserve Fund Life Ass'n.....604
COLUMBIA TELEPHONE COMPANY.....604-605-606-607-613-614-615
CORNELIUS, C. W., Phys. and Surgeon....204
COVER, F. C., Cashier Equitable Life.....306
COLLIER, P. F., Publisher; S. P. McGuire, Manager.....413-415
DAY, J. G. & I. N.....313
DAVIS, NAPOLEON, President Columbia Telephone Co.....607
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DWYER, JOE P., Tobacco.....402
EDITORIAL ROOMS.....Eighth floor
EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY; L. Samuel, Manager; F. C. Cover, Cashier.306
EVENING TELEGRAM.....128 Alder street
FENTON, J. D., Physician and Surgeon.508-510
FENTON, DR. HICKS C., Eye and Ear....511
FENTON, MATTHEW P., Dentist.....309
FIDELITY MUTUAL LIFE ASSOCIATION; E. C. Stark, Manager.....601
GALVANI, W. H., Engineer and Draughtsman.....608
GAVIN, A., President Oregon Camera Club.....214-215-216-217
GEARY, DR. EDWARD P., Physician and Surgeon.....212-213
GINN PUB. CO., Ltd., Fine Art Publishers; M. C. McGreevy, Mgr.....318
GIESY, A. J., Physician and Surgeon....719-719
GODDARD, F. C. & CO., Footwear.....Ground floor, 129 Sixth street
GOLDMAN, WILLIAM, Manager Manhattan Life Insurance Co. of New York.....209-210
GRANT, FRANK S., Attorney-at-Law.....417
HAMMAM BATHS, King & Compton, Props.508
HAMMOND, A. B.....318
HOLLISTER, DR. O. C., Phys. & Sur..504-505
IDLEMAN, C. M., Attorney-at-Law..416-17-18
JOHNSON, W. C.....215-216-217
KADY, MARK T., Supervisor of Agents Mutual Reserve Fund Life Ass'n.....604-605
LABONT, JOHN, Vice-President and General Manager Columbia Telephone Co.....604
LITTLEFIELD, H. R., Phys. and Surgeon..204
MACHUM, W. S., Sec. Oregon Camera Club.214
MACKAY, DR. A. E., Phys. and Surg..711-712
MAXWELL, DR. W. E., Phys. & Surg..701-2-3
McCOT, NEWTON, Attorney-at-Law.....713
McPADEN, MISS IDA E., Stenographer....201
McGINN, HENRY E., Attorney-at-Law.311-312
McKELLA, T. J., Manufacturers' Representative.....305
METT, HENRY.....210
MILLER, DR. HERBERT C., Dentist and Oral Surgeon.....608-609
MORSMAN, DR. F. P., Dentist.....312-313-314
MANHATTAN LIFE INSURANCE CO., of New York; W. Goldman, Manager....209-210
MUTUAL RESERVE FUND LIFE ASS'N; Mark T. Kady, Supervisor of Agents..604-605
McELROY, DR. J. G., Phys. & Sur.701-702-703
McFARLAND, E. B., Secretary Columbia Telephone Co.....609
McGUIRE, S. P., Manager P. F. Collier, Publisher.....415-416
McKIM, MAURICE, Attorney-at-Law.....309
MUTUAL LIFE INCURANCE CO., of New York; Wm. S. Food, State Mgr..404-405-406
NICHOLAS, HORACE B., Attorney-at-Law.713
NILES, M. L., Chenier Manhattan Life Insurance Co., of New York.....209
OREGON INFIRMARY OF OSTEOPATHY; Dr. L. B. Smith, Osteopath.....405-406
OREGON CAMERA CLUB.....214-215-216-217
PATTERSON, PETER.....608
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QUIMBY, L. P. W., Game and Forestry Warden.....716-717
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REED & MALCOLM, Opticians.133 Sixth street
REED, F. C., Fish Commissioner.....407
RYAN, J. B., Attorney-at-Law.....417
SAMUEL, L., Manager Equitable Life.....306
SECURITY MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE CO.; H. P. Bushong, Gen. Agent for Ore. and Wash.....501
SHERWOOD, J. W., Deputy Supreme Commander, K. O. T. M.....217
SMITH, Dr. L. B., Osteopath.....405-406
SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.500
STARK, E. C., Executive Special, Fidelity Mutual Life Association of Phila., Pa.....601
STUART, DELL, Attorney-at-Law.....617-618
STOLTE, DR. CHAS. E., Dentist.....704-705
SURGEON OF THE S. P. RY. AND N. P. TERMINAL CO.....706
STROWBRIDGE, THOS. H., Executive Special Agent Mutual Life, of New York.....406
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.....201
TUCKER, DR. GEO. F., Dentist.....616-617
U. S. WEATHER BUREAU....907-908-909-910
U. S. LIGHTHOUSE ENGINEERS, 13TH DIST., Captain W. C. Langfitt, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.....309
U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE, RIVER AND HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS, Captain W. C. Langfitt, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A..310
WATERMAN, C. H., Cashier Mutual Life of New York.....406
retary Native Daughters.....716-717
WHITE, MISS L. E., Assistant Secretary Oregon Camera Club.....214
WILSON, DR. EDWARD N., Phys. & Sur.304-5
WILSON, DR. GEO. F., Phys. & Surg..706-707
WILSON, DR. HOLT C., Phys. & Surg.707-708
WILSON & McCALLAY TOBACCO CO.; Richard Busteed, Agent.....602-603
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