FUNNY THINGS IN PROSE

TURNED DOWN VERY HARD

Feminine Upstart's Domineering Visit to Millinery Establishment Summarily Terminated.

Here is one that belongs to the eminent domain of strict truthfulness:

A couple of weeks ago a singularly domineering little woman, who a few years back married pretty well and removed to New York with her husband, a business man, came on to Washington to visit her people. Greatly overdressed and haughty to the point of imperiousness, she swept into an F-Street millinery establishment one afternoon last week.

"Turbans," she said choppily to the pleasant-faced young milliner who came forward.

"Is there any particular style of turban that you would like to see?" inquired the milliner, courteously.

"I shall look at them all, if you please, and quickly!" snapped the overdressed little female person.

The milliner took down several trimmed turbans and began to show them to the sharp-tongued customer, who glanced disdainfully at them.

Something Real Handsome.

"I want something real handsome," she said airily. "I am going to visit the Havemeyers next week, and the Havemeyers' hats are gorgeous. These are all tacky!"

"They are most of them the latest pattern turbans—Paris models," replied the milliner graciously. "Now, here is one that we have copied quite frequently of late."

"Paris, nothing!" replied the overbearing little person with the demitrain and the superfluity of showy rings. "They look like common backwoods things! Are they the best you can show?" and she sniffed most contemptuously.

The milliner with the pleasant countenance was very patient. Most milliners are patient. They have to be in their business. The young woman took down more turbans and showed them to her snappy customer. The overdressed little thing picked up one of them and tried it on. She didn't like the way it was trimmed and she stood before the glass and jabbed and poked and kneaded it, and wadded it into a miserable sort of a knot before she took it off her skimpy, blond-dined locks and threw it on the counter disdainfully.

"It is horrid!" she snapped. "My! who ever saw such old-fashioned, back-number millinery!"

She Tries Another.

She tried another of the turbans on. It was rather a swagger turban of slate-colored velvet, with a white breast on the left-hand side. It really looked well on the exalted little person, but she tugged at it and yanked it around and twisted the white breast in many different directions, and pounded on the rim of the turban, and made it look as if it had been worn by a lady on a transcontinental trip before she pulled it off her head and threw it down.

"Country!" she snapped. "Perfectly country! It anybody'd show a thing like that in Noo Yawk—huh!—the ladies'd laugh at them, so they would."

She tried on turban after turban, only to cast one after the other down with vituperation and scorn.

"Fancy one visiting the Havemeyers with a thing like that on her head!" she exclaimed, wrenching one of the turbans from her foolish little head with a peculiarly petulant, almost vicious movement.

"We are generally supposed to sell quite good millinery here," said the pleasant-faced milliner, at length.

"Oh, you are!" sneered the imperious little customer. "Huh! as if I didn't know good millinery when I see it!"

"Well, really," replied the milliner, in an offhand, matter-of-fact tone, "you ought to know good millinery, you know."

"Ought to? How's that?" inquired the domineering little customer, looking up sharply at the milliner.

A "Call-Down."

"Well, replied the milliner, looking the customer square in the eye, "you trimmed hats in ——'s place on Seventh street such a long time that, of course, you ought to know good millinery when you see it, don't you think?"

The flushed face of the domineering little customer was a picture. She opened her mouth to say something, but no words came to her. She could only gasp. She knew that she had been corralled, and that what the milliner said was true. She stood gazing wickedly at the milliner, ineffectually moving her lips, when a hat trimmer from the workroom in the back of the establishment entered the salesroom to get something out of the stock. She suddenly caught sight of the overdressed and overbearing little person.

"Why, hay-o, Mamie!" cried the hat-trimmer, advancing.

But the arrogant little customer who was "going to visit the Havemeyers" gave her former workroom companion a freezing stare and swished out, followed by the distinctly audible titters of all of the young women employes of the establishment.—Washington Star.

PLAYED CLIENT FALSE.

Attorney, Retained by Son, Has Case Thrown Out of Court.

"I shall have to make a lawyer out of that boy of mine. I don't see any other way out of it," declared the well-known attorney with a laugh. "He came into the office the other day on his way home from school and laid a nickel down on the desk before me."

"'What is this for, son?' I asked.

"'Retainer,' he answered, soberly.

"'Very well,' said I, entering into the joke. 'What have I been retained upon?'

"My boy dug down into his pocket and produced a note from his teacher and placed it before me without comment. It was to the effect that he had been 'cutting up,' and advised a whipping.

"'Now, what would you advise?' asked he in a business-like voice, after I had read the note and saw the trap that the young rascal led me into.

"'I think that our first move should be to apply for a change of venue,' said I.

"'Very well,' he answered, 'you're handling the case.'

"'Then we will turn the note over to your mother,' said I.

"I saw the young imp's face fall at this, but he braced up and said:

"'See here, pop, you're bound to see me through on this 'cause you've accepted my retainer, you know.'

"'I'll argue your case before the court,' I answered, 'but you will have to accept the decision. I would not dare to attempt to influence the court.'

"Well, I pleaded the boy's case, promptly had it thrown out of court and the boy got what he deserved—a good whipping.

"It was the first time I ever played false to a client."—Detroit Free Press.

His Escaped Bacteria.

He was apparently an old man, wore large spectacles and carried a small satchel. Across the satchel was labeled: "Professor Redd, Chicago." He entered the waiting-room of a suburban station and deposited the satchel carelessly near the ice cooler. Suddenly those near saw the satchel fall and heard the sharp tinkle of breaking glass. The old man picked up the glass and muttered exclamations of distress.

"To think I brought them all the way from Brazil," he said.

"What were they?" inquired some one in the sympathetic crowd.

"Germs!"

"What?"

"Bacteria of a strange Brazilian fever."

"Quick, man, crush them with your foot!"

"I can't, sir. They are now floating around in the air."

There was a moment of horror. Then there was a rush and a little later the old man was the only occupant of the waiting-room. A window was raised from the outside.

"Just let them out easy, Pete," cautioned a voice.

And the bogus professor obeyed. Satchels, grips and cases went through the window. After he had finished collecting, the professor followed the booty. His false beard fell back in the room, but he did not attempt to reclaim it. The arrival of their train prompted those outside to venture in for their baggage. It had vanished and the black beard told the tale.—Chicago Daily News.

Told by Ye Drummer.

Stranger (in train—A man in your business can't get home very often, I presume?

Drummer—Home! I should say not. Why, sir, I get home so seldom that I can't remember half the time where I live. Have to telegraph to the firm to send me my address!

Stranger—You don't say so!

Drummer—That's straight. Why, one time I was away so long that I forgot I'd ever been married, and I took such a fancy to the pretty woman I met in a strange town that I eloped with her.

Stranger—My! my!

Drummer—Yes; it would have been a terrible thing, but when I called on the firm during my honeymoon and introduced her the old man told me she was my wife before.—San Francisco Call.

Cause for Complaint.

The night clerk of a leading hotel of Washington, D. C., says that last Winter a Southern Congressman came to him and demanded that his room be changed.

When asked what displeased him, he replied:

"Well that German musician in the next room and I don't get along well. Last night he tooted away on his clarinet so that I thought I never would go to sleep. After I had caught a few winks I was awakened by a pounding at my door.

"'What's the matter?' I asked.

"'If you please,' said the German, 'dot you vould schnore in der same key. You was go from B flat to G, and it spoils der music.'"—Unidentified Exchange.

Army Mule's Views of China.

"I don't believe I appreciate this heathen country," said the Army mule to your special correspondent. "I don't like these Chinamen. They all look so deuced much alike. It bothers me to kick the Chinaman I want to pick to kick. Just as like as not before I can plant the kick some other Chinaman that looks just like my Chinaman will get in the way.

"Still, when you figure on results it doesn't make any great difference. A Chinaman or two, more or less, never will be missed. And, anyway, it's all for humanity's sake.

"I don't like these queues, either. They look like an absurd and insulting imitation of my tail. I chewed a couple the other day. They were as tasteless as jute.

"There are only a few of us here just now. There are a bunch who have seen service in the Philippines, and a dozen or more from India—awfully ratty looking fellows—and a few that were loaned by some public works contractors in Yokahama.

"We had a little gathering the other night—a sort of bray feast—and mutually resolved to kick every Chinaman on sight. The friendly Chinamen call us 'moolies,' and they take liberties with us. One of them picked up my tail the other day and gravely shook it, saying in his execrable English:

"'How do, Mister Moolie?'

"When they looked for him a little later all they found was a handful of undigested rice and a yellow smear!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Little Fable.

A beautiful young lady, being Engaged to a Handsome young man, sought to Reform him.

"I observe," she said, "that you are Addicted to the Foolish Habit of Smoking. Do you not think you should Stop it? It would be so much Better for you if you did. Besides, you would save Money."

"Yes, indeed," replied the Handsome young man. "And I Perceive that you are a Slave to the Chocolate Caramel Habit, which is not only Ruinous to the Digestion, but Expensive. Don't you Think you should Stop it, also?"

Whereupon she Wept, and said he was a Hateful thing, and broke the Engagement.

Moral—It is not Always the largest Feet that are Pinched the Most. Josh Wink, in Baltimore American.

Registered.

"While traveling on the Continent last Summer," said a man who has just returned from a European trip, "I engaged the services of a courier, and one evening on arriving at an inn in Austria I sent him to enter my name in accordance with the police regulations of that country. The man replied that he had already anticipated my wishes, and had registered me as an American gentleman of means.

"'But how did you know my name?' I asked.

"'I can't exactly pronounce it, but I copied it carefully from your portmanteau, sir.'

"'But it is not there,' I said. 'Bring me the book.'

"The register was brought, and on looking at it what was my amazement at finding, instead of a very plain English name of two syllables, the following portentous entry: 'Monsieur Warranted Solid Leather.'"—Washington Star.

He Congratulated Him.

They met in front of the Read House. One was fat and black, with a wonderful expanse of mouth and a voice like a couple of fog horns. The other was black and lean and wizened.

Said the fat black to the lean black: "Why doan yer 'gratulate me, Brudder Johnsing?"

"What fo' I 'gratulate you?" said Brudder Johnsing.

"What fo' you 'gratulate me? Why, man, kase I done mar'd de Widder Jeff's'n."

"You is—you dun mar'd de Widder Jeff's'n?" squeaked out the lean one.

"I sho' is dun mar'd dat lady," said the fat one, with an air of great satisfaction.

"Den I does 'gratulate yer, wif my whole heart, I sho' does."

The two separated, when the lean one turned to a knot of white gentlemen who had been interested and amused auditors to the conversation, and remarked:

"Yas, I 'gratulate him! Haw! haw! haw!—he! he! I sho' does. He's de wus en'my I has, an' I certinly 'gratulates. Why, boss," he said confidentially, singling out one of the spectators, "I wus mar'd to dat 'oman fer a year myself. Yas, I sho' do 'gratulate dat man," and he moved off toward Market street, chuckling and muttering to himself.—Chattanooga News.

Spoke as They Passed By.

The motorman clanged his gong.

But the driver of the coal wagon paid no attention to him.

The motorman clanged again.

The conductor yelled.

But the driver of the coal wagon paid no attention to him.

Again the motorman clanged his gong.

"Get out of the way, you blank-dash idiot!" he said.

But the driver of the coal wagon paid no attention to him.

Driving placidly along in the track at the rate of two miles an hour, smoking his pipe; he sat with humped shoulders, lost in thought.

A few blocks ahead was the crossing of another street-car track.

On reaching this crossing he turned slowly and deliberately to the right.

The motorman, wild with wrath, shouted at him as the car sped by:

"——————!——————!———!"

Then the coal teamster slowly and deliberately took his pipe from his mouth and replied substantially as follows:

"——————!——————!———!"

Then he replaced the pipe in his mouth and drove placidly on, lost in thought.—Chicago Tribune.

Little Mabel—I don't like my new doll. It doesn't know a thing.

Little Maud—Why doesn't it?

Little Mabel—It can't stand up nor sit down nor hold its arms out nor nothing.

Little Maud—When did you get it?

Little Mabel—Yesterday.

Little Maud—Pretty mother you are, expecting a baby to act like a grown doll as soon as it's bought—New York World.

HIS LAST WORDS ON EARTH.

Jones (who is rather nervous at times)—Julia, what is that tickling my neck?—Philadelphia Inquirer.

ROGERS EVENS UP THINGS

Swaps a Dead Horse for a Live One, Thereby Regaining His Former Self-Esteem.

"Wull, I was livin' in a town up in the state, an' come down to the tavern there one night where we men used to meet at night, and a feller, name of Hendrickson, came along in and sez, 'Hullo Rogers.'

"'Hullo,' sez I.

"'Wull,' sez he, 'it's a good night for a trade.' Them country folks is turrible for tradin'.

"'Yes,' sez I, 'if you've got anything to trade.'

"'Wull,' sez he, 'I'll trade yer my gold chain for yours. Yours is a good one, isn't it?'

"'Yes,' sez I, 'paid eighty dollars for it.'

"Wull, I looked at his chain, and it seemed to be a good 'nough chain, and I took it over to the bartender and he said it was a good chain; that they was both good chains. So we traded.

"Wull, a couple o' days after I was down in New York, and I went into a jewelry shop down in Maiden Lane, where I knew the man. Wull, sez he, 'Hullo! Rogers, hullo, how are you?'

"'Hullo,' sez I.

"Wull, he was talkin' there about the weather and one thing an' another, and then I pulled out the chain an' sez to him, 'What's that wuth?' just as tho' I didn't care nuthin' about it.

"'Tain't No Good."

"Wull, he looked at it, and then he tuk it to the winder and put a glass up to his eye an' then he looked at it again an' then he sez, '"Tain't no good.'

"'"Tain't no good?" sez I.

"'No,' sez he, 'wuth two or three dollars jus' a little bit plated.'

"'Wull,' sez I, as I tuk it back. 'I'm in a dollar on it, anyhow.'

"Wull, I went back up to the town an' when night come I went to the tavern an' I sez, 'See here, Hendrickson, that ain't no square deal.'

"'Why not?' sez he.

"'"Tain't no good,' sez I.

"'Oh,' sez he.

"'Yes,' sez I.

"'I never holler,' sez he.

"'Oh,' sez I.

"Wull, I went home, and a few days after, as I was a-comin' along the road I see the parson a sittin' on a fence, an' he calls out, 'Hullo, Rogers, hullo.'

"'Hullo,' sez I. Wull, I see that he was a lookin' sorter down in the mouth so I sez, 'Parson, you don't seem to be in very good spirits this mornin'.'

"'Wull,' sez he, 'you know that hoss of mine?'

"'Yes,' sez I, 'as good a hoss as there is in the county.'

"'Wull,' sez he, 'it's dead.'

"'Dead?' sez I.

"'Yes,' sez he.

Rogers Has an Idea.

"'Parson,' sez I, 'will yer give me that hoss?'

"'Why,' sez he, 'what do you want o' that hoss?'

"'Oh,' sez I, 'I'll bury him.'

"'Wull,' sez he, 'Rogers, you never done nuth'n' to me, an' you kin have the hoss.'

"'All right,' sez I, an' went on down to the tavern an' I went in an' I waited till Hendrickson came in.

"'Hullo, Rogers,' sez he.

"'Hullo,' sez I; 'good day for a trade.'

"'Yes,' sez he, 'if you've got anythin' to trade.'

"'Wull,' sez I, 'you know that hoss o' the parson's?'

"'Yes,' sez he.

"'Wull, it's mine,' sez I.

"'Yours?' sez he.

"'Yes,' sez I.

"'Wull,' sez he.

"'Wait,' sez I, 'till I tell you about that hoss.'

"'Oh,' sez he, 'you can't tell me nuthin' about that hoss. I know all about him.'

"'Wull,' sez I, 'what'll you give me for him?'

"'Why,' sez he, 'I'll give that hoss, wagon an' harness I got out there.'

"Wull, I went outside an' felt of the hoss and looked over the rig and I sez 'All right.'

"So we tuk the hoss an' put him in the stable and hung up the harness and we left the wagon a-standin' outside.

"Then I sez to him, 'Now, Hendrickson, you go up to the parson an' tell him to give you that hoss.'

The Tables Turned.

"Wull, he went along an' I tuk the hoss out o' the stable an' harnessed him up to the wagon and drove home. I was satisfied. Wull, the nex' day after that I come into the tavern and Hendrickson calls out, 'Hullo, Rogers, hullo!'

"'Hullo,' sez I.

"'Now,' sez he, 'that wasn't no fair deal.'

"'No?' sez I, 'why not?'

"'Why,' sez he, 'that hoss is dead.'

"'Dead?' sez I.

"'Yes,' sez he.

"'Wull,' sez I, 'I didn't say he was alive. I was a-goin' to tell you about that hoss and you said you knowed all about him.'

"'Oh, wull,' sez he, 'it ain't square, nohow.'

"'Oh,' sez I, 'I never holler.'

"Wull to this day when there's any hoss tradin' a-goin' on up in that town they ask, 'Is he alive?'"—New York Sun.

Didn't Want to Hear Her Talk.

"George, dear—"

"Don't bother me, Laura. I am reading, and I'd rather read than talk just now."

An hour dragged its way into the dim, misty past, and the voice of Mr. Ferguson was heard calling loudly:

"Laura, how much longer have I got to wait for dinner? It ought to have been ready an hour ago!"

"It was, George," responded Mrs. Ferguson, from the dining-room. "That was what I went in to tell you, but you didn't want to hear me talk. We have all finished, and everything is cold; but you needn't wait another minute if you want your dinner."—Stray Stories.

That's What!

"Who is the little chap out there by the door? Stocky, ain't he?"

"That's Watt."

"What's his name?"

"Watt."

"His name? What's the man's name?"

"That's Watt."

"What's that?"

"He's Watt."

"What?"

"Yes."

"Yes, what?"

"Watt's what."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

POEMS WORTH READING

In Memory's Land.

There the windows overlooking meadows beautiful, and deep
With white daisies, red-rimmed clover, and the poppies, fain of sleep.
Meadows that in storm and sunlight hear the sweet songs o' the rills—
Meadows lying green and constant at the broad base of the hills.

There the windows . . . . there the portal where she stood—a vision bright.
Fairly framed in morning glories—wistful in the sad twilight.
Listening—listening—ever listening in the wave of fern and fir.
For the loved steps of her lover, hastening o'er the hills to her.

Like a bird her heart is humming—like a harp at certain string:
"He is coming! He is coming! All the velvet valleys sing!
Life hath drifted—life is lifted to the highest stars above:
He is coming—he is coming o'er the meadow-lands of Love!"

And her heart goes out to meet him. . . .
Oh! the rapture and the rest!
And her red lips lean to greet him, and her gold hair crowns his breast.
"All the world hath whispered:—'Late,' dear; but the vigil time is past:
Weary—weary was the waiting—but my Love is mine at last!"

There the windows and the portal; meadows—rills in noisy race;
There the flowers that seemed to love her—smiling sweetly in her face.
But the windows now are darkened, and no more the portal shines
With that face that gave the glory to the morning glory vines!

And her lover sees the broad hills o'er the flowering meadows rise;
Hears the singing of the rivers, while the rain falls round his eyes!
In the dark, with shades enthralling—where no stars in splendor flame,
Calling—calling—ever calling one beloved and tender name.

"Flare your lights, O shadowed windows! Open, portals sweet with rest!
Blow, O south winds, o'er the meadows—waft her gold hair to my breast!
Life, its brightest glory summing, hath no music like the past,
When her heart throbbed, "He is coming, and my Love is mine at last!"

But the ghosts glide by the windows, and the portals vacant seem;
And her eyes were lights of memory, and her red lips were a dream!
Hills and rills were only phantoms; this dark house her face made sweet
In the overwhelming shadows crumbles at her lover's feet!

All life's splendor hath departed, and a dreary echo rings:
"Broken-hearted—broken-hearted—like a bird with wounded wings!"
Let the portals still be vacant—hidden from the stars above:
Let no light illume the windows till she lights the lamps of Love!

—Frank L. Stanton in Atlanta Constitution.

The World Forgets.

The grace and beauty of the world are propped
On what the world forgets or knows not of.

A poet lounging at his lazy ease
Before a Winter evening fire of coals
Basks in the red glint of the genial grate,
And sees a thousand fairy fancies rise
And glow and fade and mingle with his dream;
The while he half forgets, half sees revealed
His wife and baby in the hearth-light there.

This because, delving in the starless dark,
In breathless chambers where the puny lamp
Gleams feebly, toils a miner—his dim days
But as the restless nights of other men.
Not his our world; not his the wide, free air,
Not his the sun; but, like his brother rock
That props the low, grim roof and holds up all
The fair, bright structure of the upper world,
Itself unseen, unsightly; so his hand
Makes bright the hearthstones of a hundred homes.
Until at last, upon an evil day,
A still, black form is lifted from a mine,
And rough men whisper at their ceaseless toil.
Then in a dusky room one hearth is cold,
A head is bowed, and little children wail.

The grace and beauty of the world are propped
On what the world forgets or knows not of.

—Junius Woods Stevens in Boston Transcript.

When Thomas Took His Pen.

Young Thomas Jones came home from school
With sad and solemn air;
He did not kiss his mother's cheek nor pull his sister's hair;
He hungered not for apples, and he spoke in dismal tones;
'Twas very clear misfortunes drear had happened Thomas Jones.

"My precious child," his mother cried, "what, what is troubling you?
You're hurt—you're ill—you've failed in school! Oh, tell us what to do!"
Then Thomas Jones made answer in a dull, despairing way:
"I've got to write an essay on 'The Indian Today.'"

His tallest sister ran to him, compassion in her eye;
His smallest sister pitied him—nor knew the reason why;
And all that happy family forsook its work and play
To hunt up information on "The Indian Today."

They read of Hiawatha and of sad Ramona's woe—
You found encyclopedias where'er they chanced to go.
They bought a set of Cooper, and they searched it through and through,
While Thomas Jones sat mournfully and told them what to do.

For three whole days the library was like a moving van.
"Is Mr. Jones," each caller asked, "a literary man?"
And day by day more pitiful became young Thomas' plight,
Because, alas! the more he read, the more he could not write.

"Write what you know," his mother begged (she stirred not from his side).
"I do not know one single thing!" that wretched child replied.
"Oh! help me, won't you? Don't you care?" Then, when assistance came,
"Don't tell me—don't! It isn't fair!" he pleaded just the same.

The night before the fatal day was quite the worst of all.
Black care upon the house of Jones descended like a pall.
All pleasure paled, all comfort failed, and laughter seemed a sin;
For, "Oh! tomorrow," Thomas wailed, "it must be handed in!"

When, lo! the voice of Great-aunt Jones came sternly through the door:
"I cannot stand this state of things one single minute more!
The training of a fractious child is plainly not my mission;
But—Thomas Jones, go straight upstairs and write that composition!"

And Thomas Jones went straight upstairs and sat him down alone,
And—though I grant a stranger thing was surely never known—
In two short hours he returned serenely to display
Six neatly written pages on "The Indian Today"!

His teacher read them to the class, and smiled a well-pleased smile;
She praised the simple language and the calmly flowing style;
"For, while," she said, "he does not rise to any lofty height,
'Tis wonderful how easily young Thomas Jones can write."

—Elsie Hill in November St. Nicholas.

The Derelict.

Oh, I am the sovereign of the seas,
The deepot of the deep;
From pole to pole, where the breakers roll,
My tossing realm doth sweep.

My creaking hulk lies logged, and low
I wallow in the wave;
When the tempest rails my tattered sails
Flap forth a requiem stave.

Yet the clipper, fleet on snowy wing,
The liner, swift and strong,
The war-dog gray on its sullen way,
Yield place when I lurch along.

The captain and his cringing crew
Go white beneath the red,
As I roll near—they know the fear
Of Davy Jones' bed.

The flagship I of the graveyard fleet,
That haunts the salt highway,
I ask no fee; right merrily
I bring death and dismay.

—M. W. Pool in New York Sun.

Bills.

Oh, the bills,
Ceaseless bills!
What a world of happiness their endless coming kills!
How they keep on multiplying
As the toiler toils away,
Bravely trying, trying, trying
(While his wife is buying, buying)
To get even with the world again some day.
Grocery bills,
Butchers' bills,
Bills for water, bills for plumbing, bills for coal,
Bills that rend the patient heart and warp the soul!
Bills for milk
And bills for silk;
Bills for thread
And bills for bread!
Doctors' bills and dentists' bills,
Servants' bills and nurses' bills—
Bills that make the victim wish that he were dead
And forever free from bills, bills, bills, bills;
Out of sight and out of hearing of the ones who give him chills
With their bills—
With the accent on the bills—
The discouraging and everlasting bills, bills, bills, bills, bills, bills, bills,
The accumulating terrors of the bills!
Here a victim wields the hammer or the saw;
There another delves in musty books of law,
And here one slowly scratches with the pen,
Sighing sadly
As he madly
Tries to think of things that, maybe when in print, will tickle men!
Is it fame
They would claim?
Does the porter or the teamster merely strive to win a name
That will make his children proud of him some day?
Does the writer or the lawyer
Or the merchant or the sawyer
Strive away
Just because it's fun to do so, or from force of habit? Nay!
The bills,
The never-ending bills there are to pay
Make the joker think of funny things to say,
Make the lawyer thunder fiercely at the bar,
Keep the sallow motorman with the chills
Of death upon him clinging to his car!
Oh, the bills,
The bills, bills, bills!
From the markets and the mills
And the mines beneath the hills
Come the bills,
Come the soul-destroying bills,
Come the bills for little shirts,
And for little coats and caps,
Come the bills for swishing skirts
And for feathers and for wraps,
And for squills
And for castor oil and pills!
Ah, the bills,
The steady stream of bills, bills, bills, bills, bills,
The never-ceasing bother of the bills!
They tell us now there isn't any hole
Full of fire to receive the wicked soul;
That there isn't any Satan down below
Who instills
Sinful purposes in people here, but oh!
There are bills
That bring hate and discontent,
There are bills for food and rent,
And a million other things—
E'en if little Myrtle sings—
If she trills—
Her music teacher brings
In his bills!
Bills for cutting, bills for sewing,
Bills for shrouds and bills for bibs;
Bills for coming, bills for going,
Bills for coffins and for cribs—
Bills for everything but breathing, always bills!
And for every bill you pay, a dozen more
Seem to be where only one appeared before!
Oh, the bills, bills, bills, bills, bills!
The accumulating terrors of the bills!
And yet who would ever rise
Here below the sunny skies,
Who would study to be wise,
Who would ever seek a prize,
Who would toil
In the soil
Or with hammer or with pen,
Who would ever brave the thrills
That he feels whose fellow-men
Give him praise
If the bills
Never came to daunt or daze?
If we never heard of bills, bills, bills, bills bills,
The awful and the everlasting bills?

—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Times-Herald.

Just a Pleasant Smile.

The thing that goes the furthest toward making life worth while,
That costs the least and does the most, is just a pleasant smile,
The smile that bubbles from a heart that loves its fellow-men
Will drive away the clouds of gloom and coax the sun again.
It's full of worth, and goodness, too, with manly kindness blent—
It's worth a million dollars, and it doesn't cost a cent.

There is no room for sadness when we see a cheery smile—
It always has the same good look—it's never out of style—
It nerves us on to try again when failure makes us blue;
The dimples of encouragement are good for me and you.
It pays a higher interest, for it is merely lent—
It's worth a million dollars, and it doesn't cost a cent.

A smile comes very easy—you can wrinkle up with cheer
A hundred times before you can squeeze out a soggy tear.
It ripples out, moreover, to the heartstrings that will tug,
And always leaves an echo that is very like a hug.
So smile away. Folks understand what by a smile is meant—
It's worth a million dollars, and it doesn't cost a cent.

—Baltimore American.

A Hoosier.

Loafin' at the grocery in the evenin's, up speaks "Boze";
"Give me old St. Louis, where the Mississippi flows!"
Next comes Billy Porterfield, a-sayin': "Let me be
On the old Scioto, fer it's Buckeye skies fer me!"
An' I jist
Set an' twist!—
Madder 'an the madderist!
Then chimes in Pete Effingwell: "Oh, to breathe the free
Air upon the sunny hills o' sunny Tennessee!"
Mixin' with the lonesome tune that Joe Delaney sighs:
"Oh, fer old Virginny an' Virginny's lovin' skies!"
An' I chaw—
Thinkin': Law!
Pity what YOU ever saw!
Then I hear a murmur comin' from old Pat McGarr:
"Oh, to be in Texas, 'neath her twinkling little star!"
An' Joe Moxley whispers: "Oh, if I could only stick
Barefeet in the riffles of a Minnesota crick!"
An' I rile,
An' I bile!
This to ME on Hoosier sile!

—Edward Singer in Indianapolis Sun.

The Way of the Kicker.

When things are runnin' smoothly,
All nicely oiled an' slick,
There comes a great temptation
To start a little kick.
You're kind o' tired o' quaffin'
From a nectar-laden cup,
You want a little ginger,
So you go an' stir things up.

You're hungry fur excitement,
You're tired of hum-drum life;
You're seized with an ambition
Fur to lead a strenuous life.
An' when you've raised a rumpus,
An' done the best you could,
You're feelin' somewhat better
'Cause you've roused the neighborhood.

But when you've had excitement
Fur a day or so, you find
That you'd go to any trouble
To regain your peace o' mind.
An' when the years find matters
Again a-runnin' slick,
Fur a week or so, you're willin'
Not to start another kick.

—Washington Star.

Satisfied.

Love wore a threadbare dress of gray,
And toiled upon the road all day.
Love wielded pick and carried pack,
And bent to heavy loads the back.
Though meager-fed and sorely tasked,
The only wage Love ever asked—
A child's white face to kiss at night,
A woman's smile by candle-light.

—Margaret E. Sangster in Lippincott's.

Taken In.

We had all made the guess by the cut of his dress an' the tenderfoot style that he slung,
An' the way that he spun toney language that run slick as grease from the p'int of his tongue,
That he was a red-hotter from over the water, a juke or a markis or wuss
Than that in his rank, an' we thought we could bank on a havin' some fun with the cuss.
He talked with a drawl till his words seemed to fall reluctant from outen his mouth,
An' the babyish stare in his eyes you would swear showed a brain that was stunted by drouth.
An' the boys o' the range all regarded the strange sort o' cuss that had come there to board
Fur his health as a snob, an' we put up a job that'd lower the pride o' my lord.

He remarked he could ride anything that wore hair; he had rid with the 'ounds, don't ye know;
And we told him we thought we'd be able to trot out a hoss that wa'n't fashioned for show—
One o' kittenish views—that'd serve to amuse of his highness, if he was inclined
Fur to try it a whirl, an' he smiled like a girl, an' would ride it if we didn't mind,
An' he went further yet with an offer to bet all the boodle that we could perduce
That he'd ride anything we'd a notion to bring till he toned it down tame as a goose.
An' in manner quite rash our available cash was flashed fur to back up our views
That we'd find him a chunk of a quick-action bronk that'd buck him plum outen his shoes!

We'd a mare in the herd that was reckoned a bird, jest a bundle o'git-up-an'-git,
Half devil, half hoss, which the same is a cross that's productive o' mesmness an' grit;
She had downed every rider that dared get astride her' an' had crippled a dozen or so
Of the fellows who'd said that the hoss wasn't bred that could give 'em the wust of a go;
So we saddled ol' Satan, the tenderfoot waltin' with a grin on his innocent face,
An' we got him astraddle an' sot in the saddle an' seed everything was in place,
An' we bid him good-by with a wink o' the eye at each other, an' anxiously stood
Holdin' onto the head o' the bronk till he said we might let 'er go, if we would.

If the heavens had fell all around that corral and drowned us in clouds from the skies,
I kin tell you, by gad, that we wouldn't a had any bigger a bunch o', surprise.
Fur he sot in his seat in the saddle as neat as if lollin' around in a chair,
An' that bronco a thumpin' the earth and a jumpin' in spasms right up in the air;
Lit a cigarette right in the heat o' the fight an' grinned at the animal's jumps,
Us guys standin' there with a paralyzed stare like a bunch of half-idiot chumps.
An' I'm tellin' you, boss, that he stayed with that hoss until he got it as meek as a calf,
An' rid it around on the hoof-battered ground an' a givin' us fellers the laugh!

Every devilish bloke in the gang had gone broke a backin' his honest belief
That the bronco we'd picked——that had never been licked—'d sure bring the stranger to grief,
An' we bellered an' swore till our lungs was plum sore when we learned that the schemin' young hound
Was Bronco Bill Snyder, the champion rider, a huntin' a snap—which he found.

—James Barton Davis in Denver Evening Post.

A Twilight Friend.

Who is it breathes outside my door,
Then jars the lock with ghostly click,
And venturing further to explore,
Glides softly in? Uncanny trick!

I, wrapped in shadows, scarcely hear
The bold intruder—quick or dead,
Too desolate for hope or fear,
I lift not my despondent head.

Then in my clasped and rigid palm,
That shuts a muscular despair,
Is thrust a muzzle, soft and warm,
And, presto! goes my every care!

'Tis but a dog! Retriever Dick,
But loving, human, kindly soul,
How has he learned to choose and pluck
From all the rest, my hour of dole?

—M. L. Rayne in Chicago Times-Herald.