

FUNNY THINGS IN PROSE



TALE OF THE FAT MASCOT

Excess of Avariciousness at the Home Plate, Summarily Terminates a Career of Distinction.

"Well, why is it you never played baseball yourself?" asked a latter-day fan of the very stout man sitting in the corner. "You say you were the mascot for the famous Lightfoot, Liller, and Jones County, and yet, with the exception of the time that they put you in to force the winning run in the 10th by being hit in the stomach, you never seem to have played yourself. After such successful daring as you never asked to play again? I don't quite understand."

The stout man gazed at the speaker searching for a few minutes, and then, apparently satisfied that the questions were asked in good faith, proceeded to unfold the one dark shadow in his otherwise sunny life.

"Have you never heard?" he began. "Then you shall hear, and though I think no blame should rest with me, you yourself shall judge of that. Listen. You have already referred to the contest in which I forced the winning run owing to the pitcher's inability to put the ball over the plate without striking my corporation. This, I believe, was due to a law of physics which states that but one body can occupy the same space at the same time, or words to that effect."

"But whatever the cause, I acquired a reputation for hitting baseballs second to none in Jones County, and at once got a regular position on the team. My figure being my stock in trade, Captain Sluggish Burrows, of the Lightfoots, spared no pains in bringing me to physical perfection before the next game with the Roarers. Under a carefully selected diet of beer, butter, lard, potatoes and cod liver oil I rapidly rose from a meager 125 pounds to the magnificent figure of 412."

Sustains His Reputation.

"For the first eight innings of the great contest which ultimately proved my downfall, I fully sustained my enviable reputation for artistic ballplaying. Three times the bases were full with the Roarers one run in the van. Three times I proved the Lightfoots' salvation by forcing the tying run by means of my superior figure. Three times the home rotters tried with one another in futile attempts to pay me suitable homage. I was truly more than queen. And then that fatal ninth with its brilliant cup of gumstick-bitter. Four hundred and twelve pounds of shattered idol!"

"In the last half of the ninth I reached first through my customary strategy. Later I succeeded in gaining third by a sliding bit of base-running while the Roarers' fielders were searching for Bill Thompson's liner on the other side of the center-field fence. Sammie Salmon and one of the Foote twins died easy deaths on infield pop-flys. There were Ring-tail Roarers, 17; Lightfoot Liller, 16; two out, Thompson and yours truly on second and third bases respectively, and the inevitable Home Run Hankins at the bat. All were breathless with suspense. The pitcher swung his arm back slowly and then, with a bang! Home Run Hankins never missed his aim."

"I struggled heavily toward the plate, and in less time than it takes to tell it Thompson was at my back pushing violently. I doubled my efforts. A moment later Hankins himself caught up and joined in the single-file struggle for home and victory. 'Twas do or die, and the people were like lunatics in their wild excitement. Spurred on by their cheers I was soon but five feet from the plate, with Thompson and Hankins still dancing at my heels. Then suddenly a voice rose clearly above the others: 'Slide, Willie, slide!' it rang out. Oh, fatal words!"

And Willie Slid.

At this point the fat ex-mascot was overcome by emotion and stopped short. It was some minutes before he could pull himself together sufficiently to go on with his sad story.

"Well," he said at last, "I slid. Diving gracefully forward, I slid a nicely calculated slide that brought my chest directly above the rubber. But the enthusiasm this occasioned among the Liller was short-lived."

"Touch the plate, you fool, touch the plate," Bull Thompson and Hankins yelled together.

"Now, would you believe it, sir, try as I would I couldn't. My corporation had been overstrained. Lying face down I was so high from the ground that my arms would not reach the plate."

"Rock me," I cried. "Rock me." "Rock you?" Bill Thompson roared. "Rock you? We'll rock you, stone you, egg you, and touch that plate, d'ye hear?"

"Rock me," I pleaded with tears in my eyes. "You don't understand. Rock me like you would a rocking horse. Till me. I can't touch bottom."

"Twas too late. While I had been explaining my predicament to those block-heads the Roarers' fielders found the ball, and—er—well, we lost. Afterward I told Captain Sluggish Burrows how it happened and begged for just one more chance. No use. He said that any fool with my shape ought to have sense enough to slide on his back, and that—but say, honest inquis, now, do you think I was in any way to blame?"—New York Sun.

AUNT HARRIET IN TOWN.

Brings Rock County News Budget Along With Her.

Mrs. Weidman's husband's Aunt Harriet came in from Rock County, Wis., to "see the folks" a few days ago. She has not been down from the country for nearly two years, and, therefore, had much to tell.

"How are the Waltons?" Emma Weidman asked. "The last time you were here I believe you said they were about to lose their farm."

"They came 'par' high bell" turned out. Aunt Harriet replied, "but Sila Cantor let 'em have a new mortgage or something, so they're gittin' along again, kinda from hand to mouth, like they always done. My gracious! it do seem as though some folks was just natchally born without no gumption on earth. I s'pose you heard about old Miss Tucker fallin' downstairs and breakin' her collar bone?"

been real well ever since, and Mary, you know, had trouble with her husband because she wouldn't let him use the new top buggy unless he took her along, so they parted, and she's tryin' to git a bill now. Len he's poorly, too. You remember 'em, don't you?"

"Yes, I believe I do. He is their youngest child, isn't he? But he was quite small when we came away, you know."

"Yes, but he's nearly 25 years old now. Well, he's in a terrible fix. Can't walk nor hardly move, and they have to help 'im around just as you would a baby."

"Dear me!" said Emma Weidman, "that's too bad. I suppose he has locomotor ataxia?"

"Oh, no," Aunt Harriet made haste to reply, "they ain't no enough of it to have any of them nerved things. It's just a chair with wheels on it."—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Times-Herald.

At the Tail End. An old man with bulging satchel at his feet was wiping the tears from his eyes, and after a bit a good hearted fellow-passenger leaned over and said:

"Stranger, you seem to be in trouble."

"Waal, I'm feeling bad," was the reply as the handkerchief went up.

"Have you been robbed or lost your money, Leander?"

"Noap."

"Lost a dear friend by death?"

"Noap."

"Perhaps you are suffering pain?"

"Noap. It's none of that. I've bin to Mount Vernon, and saw the tomb of the father of his country. I didn't pay much attention then, not for a day or two, but to once today it struck me what a good man he was and that he was dead, and—excuse me, I know it's babyish, but I can't help it."

"But isn't this weeping over Washington rather late in the day?" inquired a second passenger.

"How late?"

"Why, he has been dead about a hundred years."

"Jerusalem," but you don't say! Why, that hackdriver put it down since corn-plants and even wondered that I did not have a weed on my hat. Hokey pokey, but I'm no man to weep over any body who pegged out a hundred years ago."

Washington Post.

Know Thyself. A teacher in one of Boston's public schools had instructed her pupils in hygiene, and toward the end of the term, wishing to see how well they could remember, told them to each write out a little story of the human body. The following is copied from the "story" one small boy handed her, with the confident assurance that he knew it was all right, for he had studied very hard over it:

"The human body is divided into three parts: the head, the thorax and the abdomen."

"The head contains the brains, if there are any; the thorax contains the heart and the vital organs, and the abdomen the bowels, of which there are five, a, e, i, o, and u, and sometimes w and y."

The Household.

Saved Him a Dollar. There's a good story told on a young fellow here noted for his closeness. He went to spend the night with a friend. During the entire night he betrayed much restlessness, which kept the host wide awake, and finally the slumberer betrayed signs of violent emotion. "He's going to have a nightmare," said the friend, "but he always grumbles so when you wake him up that I hate to disturb him."

He waited a while longer, sitting up in bed staring at the miserable sleeper, and

finally, becoming alarmed, he roused him. He sprang up in bed, glared wildly around and said: "Where am I? I don't see the storm!"

"Why, here in my room," said the host soothingly; "you remember you stayed all night with me? I beg your pardon for waking you up, but you carried on so I had to."

"Beg my pardon," gasped the guest. "I shall never be grateful enough to you. I dreamed I was out with Miss Bud and a terrible storm came up, and my shoes were new, and I was just ordering a coupe for two when you aroused me. Old boy, you have saved me a dollar."

And the host says he was actually afraid to go to sleep again that night, for fear the coupe would come—Louisville Times.

Suspicion Confirmed. An old gentleman, evidently a gatherer of statistics, but with a kindly face which shaded off to something like philanthropy about the edges, was gazing abstractedly down Regent street. Suddenly he stepped up to a gentleman who was waiting for a bus, and, touching him lightly on the shoulder, said, "Excuse me, but did you just drop a sovereign?" holding in his hand the coin mentioned.

The gentleman questioned made a hasty search of his pockets and said:

"Yes, I did. And I hadn't missed it!" holding out an eager hand.

The old man drew forth a notebook and took his name and address, and then said: "I thought so," turning away.

"Well," said the other, "do you want it all as a reward?"

"I did not find one," said the old man, "but it struck me that in a large city like this there must be a lot of money lost, and upon inquiry I find you are the best man who has lost a sovereign this very morning."—London Tit-Bits.

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