

LABOR.

[James L. Blair.] There's a never dying chorus Breaking on the human ear In the busy town before us...

NEW ORLEANS "AUNTIES."

The Feminine Negro of the Crescent City in Her Glory.

The pure feminine negro is seen in and about New Orleans in all her old-time glory. You see them in the kitchens, on the streets, in the horse-car, everywhere anybody is seen...

It is a pleasant sight to see an aged negress rolling along the street, bearing a basket or bundle, her mouth half way open so that the laugh that is very close to the surface may find the outer air with the least trouble...

Without this turban the dress of no negress would be complete. It takes the place of hat or bonnet, and is a universal for the petticoat or shoes. Indeed, it is more the thing than shoes...

Turned Away His Wrath. [Harper's Bazar.] An up-town pastor, who enlivens his Friday evening talks with anecdotes, is so fond of a joke that he would rather tell one at his own expense than not tell one at all...

Bottled Tears. [E. Stern Letter.] In Persia they bottle their tears as of old. This is done in the following manner: As the mourners are sitting around and weeping, the master of ceremonies presents each one with a piece of cotton, with which he wipes off his tears...

A Chinese Notion. The Chinese hold the theory that by preserving a fellow creature from drowning, the rescuer is answerable in the next world for all the sins afterward committed by the person rescued...

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Coleridge: Advice is like snow; the softer it falls the longer it dwells upon and the deeper it sinks into the mind.

WHAT KIND OF BOOKS?

Rev. Robert Collyer's Talk Before the Young Men's Christian Union.

I have felt that it would be a good thing to talk to you to-night about the companionship of good books. They will deepen and sweeten the joys of young men and women. I suppose that I might say it is fifty-five years, or nearly so, since I dreamed over the first of them, of one of them especially, "Whittington and His Cat."

The best books often reveal their worth after many years. They did not think much of Shakespeare in his time. Good books are like the wine we hear of (that we never see of course), that grows precious in the long lapse of years. Such is the genesis of all the great books.

I would say a word of caution. There are books we can read as a man takes opium, which make us feel like heaven, but they leave a greater desolation than opium. There are also books we may devour in any quantity without any harm, except the taking up of our time—books that are as foam to the sea.

The Sunday Schools of the World. Mr. Fountain J. Hartley, one of the secretaries of the Sunday School union, has published in The Sunday School Chronicle two statistical papers, in which he gives an estimate of the number of Sunday school teachers and scholars in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

In the United Kingdom the totals are—teachers, 64,704; scholars, 6,090,677. In Great Britain there are 760,255 teachers and 6,225,708 scholars. In the United States, 132,283 teachers and 1,620,835 scholars. As to Sunday schools on the continent, and in connection with the various missionary societies throughout the world, only an approximate estimate is possible; but Mr. Hartley gives the following figures as the minimum computation: In European countries 33,053 teachers, and 773,100 scholars; in connection with the several missionary societies, 21,404 teachers and 386,808 scholars. The grand total throughout the world is therefore—teachers, 1,766,936; scholars, 14,805,451.

Solemn Words to Kentuckians. [Louisville Courier-Journal.] Again we say, as so often we have said in these columns, that from the sin of blood guiltiness no citizen of this commonwealth is free. We do not deal with crime as we ought. We tolerate murder and pardon vice and honor criminals if they are brave.

Turned Away His Wrath. [Harper's Bazar.] An up-town pastor, who enlivens his Friday evening talks with anecdotes, is so fond of a joke that he would rather tell one at his own expense than not tell one at all. This is his latest: "I was writing by my study window, and a little Irish child was buying himself by throwing beans at the window. Losing all patience, I rushed out of the house, determined to frighten the boy. It happened that his mother was coming after him at the same moment, and we met by his side. I stormed at the child, and then, as the mother seemed excessively stupid, I gave her a piece of my mind. Finally, as a grand and overwhelming conclusion of my scolding, I said: 'A little discipline now with your children will save you much pain, if not disgrace, in the future. Think of that, madam; that is, if you ever do think.' 'Think, it is?' she replied; 'I think if you'd go back to your bed-room and wipe the ink off your nose you'd be prettier, even if you didn't make so much of a sensation.' It was not a soft answer, but it had the effect of turning away wrath."

Bottled Tears. [E. Stern Letter.] In Persia they bottle their tears as of old. This is done in the following manner: As the mourners are sitting around and weeping, the master of ceremonies presents each one with a piece of cotton, with which he wipes off his tears. This cotton is afterward squeezed into a bottle, and the tears are preserved as a powerful and efficacious remedy for reviving a dying man after every other means have failed. It is also employed as a charm against evil influences. This custom is probably alluded to in Psalm vi, 8: "Put thou my tears into a bottle."

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Shakespearean Slang.

The power of Shakespeare over the public is shown by the extent to which his phrases, and even his slang, has become incorporated into our language. In this point, indeed, he is unequalled. Among these is "bag and baggage," "dead as a door nail," "proud of one's humblity," "tell the truth and shame the devil," "hit or miss," "love is blind," "selling for a song," "wide world," "cut copies," "fast and loose," "unconsidered trifles," "westward ho," "familiarity breeds contempt," "patching up excuses," "misery makes strange bedfellows," "to boot" (in a trade), "shot and long of it," "comb your head with a three-legged stool," "dancing attendance," "getting even" (revenge), "birds of a feather," "that's flat," "tag rag," "Greek to me" (unintelligible), "send one packing," "as the day is long," "packing a jury," "mother wit," "kill with kindness," "mum" (for silence), "ill-wind that blows no good," "wild-goose chase," "a re-crow," "luggage," "row of pins" (as a mark of value), "viva voce," "give and take," "sold" (in the way of a joke), "give the devil his due," "your cake is dough."

Gen. Grant's Missouri Farm.

One of the possessions of the Grant family, which will probably go to pay their debts, is their old Dent farm near St. Louis. It is about ten miles from the city, perhaps fifteen, on the Carondelet branch of the Missouri Pacific railroad. It was left to Mrs. Grant by her father, and is now held probably in her individual name. It was there where Mrs. Grant was raised, and it was from there that Gen. Grant used to haul wood to St. Louis. The place now looks well worn and somewhat dilapidated, though it has an immense barn, built some years ago when Gen. Grant purchased a number of fine horses and left them there. It was his intention at one time to turn the old Dent homestead into an extensive stock farm, but he soon got tired of the experiment and had a sale whereat he let go all his fine horses.

I was there last spring and the once splendid farm was only a reminder of what it had been. The only family residence where Gen. and Mrs. Grant had lived for a number of years was almost ready to tumble down from age and neglect, and all that was left to remind one of Gen. Grant's abortive venture in stock-raising were the magnificent but empty barn, and a vacant broken-down mule that mined the grass lonely enough in a slovenly-looking pasture. Mrs. Grant has finally retained a warm affection for her family homestead, and when she and the general were in St. Louis the last time they hired Mr. Jesse Arnot's best pair of horses and drove out to spend the day there.

The Boys' Fault.

A veteran of Wall street says it is remarkable how many young men there are in the street. Go into some of the largest banks and banking houses and you will find responsible positions filled by striplings hardly showing the dawn of adolescence on their cheeks. So it is at the stock board and on other exchanges. The old fellow, who says he has no prejudice against young men, adds: "The great financial business of New York is done by an army of bumptious boys. Is it strange that we have constant failures, plunders, delinquencies and dishonors? It is not strange; but it is strange that nothing is learned by bitter experience; that there is no attempt at reform. If you observe the balk of the failures in that quarter you will find them occasioned by younger members of the firms, who have tried to improve on the fathers' methods, and who scout conservatism and caution as old-foggyish."

A Very Steady Pulse.

L. D. Chevalley, a native of Switzerland, aged 68, when recently on board a steamboat on the lake of Geneva, engaged to indicate to the crowd around him the lapse of a quarter of an hour, or as many minutes or seconds as anyone chose to name, and, further, to indicate by the voice the moment the hand passed over the quarter-minutes or half minutes, or any other subdivision stipulated. This he did without mistake in the midst of a diversified conversation. He acquired by imitation and patience a movement which neither thought nor labor nor anything can stop. It is similar to that of a pendulum, which at each motion of going and returning gives him the space of three seconds, so that twenty of them make a minute, and these he adds to others continuously.

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ABOUT LAUGHTER.

Many Different Varieties—Commercial Value of a Good Laugh.

A laugh may convey all manner of sentiments—joy, scorn, or anger; it may be the most musical or most discordant of sounds, the most delightful or the most horrible which can fall upon our ears. Contrast the happy laughter of merry children with the gibbering cry of the maniac, or the hoarse laugh of a defiant criminal; the musical ripple of cultivated mirth with the roars of a tipsy crowd at a fair.

A really musical laugh is, perhaps, rarer than a really musical voice. The giggle, the snigger, the half-hokey laugh are common enough; but how seldom do we hear that melodious sound, the laugh in its perfection. It should not be shrill, nor too loud, nor too long. It should not bear any double meaning, any hidden sarcasm in its mirth. It should not be so boisterous as to exhaust the laughter and deafen the listeners.

Peg Woffington is said to have been celebrated for the music of her laughter on the stage—a most difficult accomplishment, for nothing (except, perhaps, a sneeze) is harder to counterfeit than a laugh. There are many varieties of laughs. There is the musical, cultivated, and extremely rare one, pleasant to listen to as a chime of bells. There is the glad, if somewhat shrill, merriment of children, the happiness of which condones its noise.

There is the loud guffaw of the vulgar, and the laughter which appears likely to tear the laughter in pieces, causing him to wipe his eyes after the explosion is over. There is the laugh of embarrassment, when a shy person at a loss what to say next, "remarks to he," as Artemus Ward describes it. There is the schoolgirl's giggle; and the schoolboy's snigger, as he reflects on some recently-perpetrated, but still recollected, piece of mischief. There is the chuckle of the successful man.

All these bear some family resemblance to each other; they all, in their degree, express sensations of pleasure. There are darker descriptions of laughter. There are laughs more cutting than the bitterest speeches, more alarming than the cruelest threats. Satirical laughter is most offensive. A laugh can convey contempt which words would fail to express.

Is any one proof against being annoyed by ridicule? Even a dog isensible when he is laughed at, and resents the impertinence. Some animals are indeed quite as sensitive to derisive as human beings. The laughter of the underbred, which finds open amusement in the minor troubles of their neighbors—say the ridiculous lavishes on sea-sick arrivals at a pier, or on hapless foreigners in an altercation with a cabman, or an old gentleman who falls down a slide—also ranks among "laughs offensive."

Then there is the laugh of incredulity. When Tom goes to his rich old uncle, full of glowing descriptions of the perfection of the lady to whom he is engaged, or of the appointment which he expects to obtain, does the old gentleman damp his nephew's ardor by a long harangue? No, he only gives a dry laugh; and Tom's hopes of a check fall rapidly.

Too rare laughs are as unpopular as ready ones. A teller of good stories never forgives the man who does not laugh at his jokes. Many persons have made their fortunes by laughing at ludicrous moments; applauding some poor jest, or becoming convulsed with mirth at a dull pun. To be duly appreciative of his patron's wit was an important part of the duty of a hanger-on. With what ready laughter a schoolmaster's witticisms received by his class!

There is a story of a dramatic author, whose play had been accepted, being requested to make sundry alterations to suit the taste of the actors. Among other changes the manager suggested that "a laugh" should be introduced in the conclusion of a speech of an out-going performer; "it would give him a better exit." The author pleaded that to admit this alteration would spoil the whole dialogue, but the manager was urgent still. "Think it over and do what you can. B—'s position in the theatre demands it." When laughs are thus prized it is not wonderful that persons who rarely use their risible muscles are unpopular.

Economical Theology.

The season for raising corn was not a very good one last year, and about Austin, on account of the drought. Several members of the Austin Blue Light Tabernacle called on their pastor, Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter, to pray for rain, he having neglected to do so. Whangdoodle received the delegation graciously. They stated that rain had been prayed for in most of the prominent churches of the white folks, and they thought that he also should urge the necessity of immediate showers, as the corn was almost too far gone to raise more than half a crop.

"I on all sava dat de white, piscopal bishop and de rev' ob de preachers prayed for rain?" queried Whangdoodle. "Dey has done did hit," was the reply. "Fool niggahs!" exclaimed Whangdoodle indignantly, "what de sense ob my prayin' for rain too dan? If de white folks gets rain, wont you get it too, widout my prayin' for hit?"

Vacation Advice.

Last week, when about to break up for the holidays, Mr. Spurgeon dismissed his young men with a caution. "Don't get courting. That is not good for students. Come back, as some one puts it, with your hearts and manners uncracked. Walk in the fields like Isaac, by all means, and meditate, but don't lift up your eyes for Rebecca. She will come soon enough."

Helen Wilmans: A man's wrongs are his rights until he accumulates enough spirit to resent them.

Curious Customs of the Seminoles.

A child at its birth is called a pappoose, but when old enough to walk it receives a second name. A girl is a suaw at 14; at 20 another cognomen is given denoting that she is of age. The boy has more difficulty in obtaining his last name. When he enters his teens he is summoned before the warriors, who proceed, with sharp flints, to make six scratches on each side of his four extremities. If he endures the ordeal bravely he receives a name indicating the valiant warrior he is expected to become. Of this he is very proud, and takes the utmost pains to verify it. If, however, the boy shows any sign of weakness during the scratching process he is dubbed for life with some derisive epithet, as "king of the alligators."

Among the Seminoles intemperance and theft are nearly abolished, they say, "because they strike at the root of the matter." A man arrested for theft receives, the first time, fifty lashes; the second, 100 lashes, and is marked for life by having one ear cut off. The third offence costs his life. As Indian laws are promptly and surely executed, the first or second punishment, generally, effectually cures kleptomany. For intemperance justice is equally summary. The Indian, excited by liquor, is a noisy fellow, and his whoops invariably attract attention to the venter of the poison. A company has been organized among them called the Light Horsemen. As soon as unusual yelling resounds from any particular locality, down sweep the Light Horsemen, who seize the whisky-keg, pour its contents on the ground, compel the owner to pay \$4 a gallon for all it originally contained, and leave a slight souvenir of their visit in the shape of 100 lashes.

Jackson's Power of Acting.

[Washington Cor. Cleveland Lva. et.] Andrew Jackson was a consummate actor, and much of his anger, which was the terror of office seekers, was feigned. Senator Hugh L. White, of Tennessee, once told me that he was in Washington during the trouble as to the rechartering of the United States bank, which, it will be remembered, was located at Philadelphia. The friends of the bank held a meeting at Philadelphia, and appointed a commission to go to Washington and to remonstrate with the president about his course. Senator White was with the president when the delegation arrived. He received them graciously enough at first and permitted them to make their plea. This they did in the strongest terms, telling him he was ruining the country, and that if he persisted the grass would grow in the business streets of Philadelphia and the country would go to the dogs generally.

As they thus proceeded Jackson's face began to cloud and his brows to knit. When they had finished he rose and went for them in the roughest style, pretending to take some of their remarks as insulting, and swearing, by the eternal, he would not submit to it. "In a few minutes," said Judge White, "he had driven them terrified from the room, and as the last man left he turned to me with a laugh and said, 'That was an easy riddance, wasn't it, judge?' and commenced to talk of other matters. The fact of it was, he was not angry at all, but he had used this method to get rid of people with whom he did not wish to be bored."

Where Blackburn Met His Baby.

[Congressman Blackburn, of Kentucky.] Four days before I went to the front with my regiment we had a little girl baby. She is now grown, and you always see her with me at any social gathering. Well, in our army the fur-loughs came very rarely. When we got into line there was no great chance for a man to get home. It was about three years afterward that a few of us were one night going down the Mississippi on a river steamer. I had been sick and was returning to my command, but pretty well broken up, even then. As for money, we did not have any, and the night was hot as I laid down on the deck, my throat almost parched with thirst.

Pretty soon a little girl came along with a glass of lemonade. I tell you it looked good to me. She saw me eyeing it, stopped a minute, looked doubtfully at me, and finally came up to my side. "You looked as if you wanted something to drink," she said, and offered me the glass. It wasn't the square thing to do, but I took it and handed it back to her empty. It was like nectar to me. Then I thanked the little creature and sent her away. Soon after, just like every child, she came back, leading her mother to see the poor soldier. By Jupiter, it was my wife, and the girl was the baby whom I had last seen as a baby but just born. You can imagine the reunion. They were with my brother's family, and happened to be going down the river. That was the only time during the four years' fighting that I saw my wife and baby, and under these circumstances what man would ever forget it?

American Inventions.

An English journal gives credit to Americans for at least fifteen inventions and discoveries which, it says, have been adopted all over the world. First, the cotton gin; second, the planing-machine; third, the mower and reaper; fourth, the rotary printing press; fifth, navigation by steam; sixth, the hot air or caloric engine; seventh, the sewing machine; eighth, the India-rubber (vulcanite process) industry; ninth, the machine manufacture of horse shoes; tenth, the sand-blast for carving; eleventh, the gauge lathe; twelfth, the grain elevator; thirteenth, artificial ice manufacture on a large scale; fourteenth, the electro-magnet and its practical application; fifteenth, the composing machine for printers.

Several Things.

A Chicago paper enumerates these things which every man can do better than anyone else: Poke a fire, put on his hat, edit a newspaper, tell a story—after another man has commenced it—and examine a railway time table. Philadelphian Ledger: The prevailing disposition is to trust too much to legislative remedies for moral shortcomings.

TWO SCORE YEARS AGO.

Some of the Customs of Our Fathers—Various Changes.

The San Francisco Chronicle notes some of the changes that have occurred within half a century in the subjoined paragraphs:—Family cooking was better than at present. Our mothers and grandmothers "took a hand" in it. Bread was made at home. Coffee was freshly ground every morning for breakfast. The grinding of the family coffee mill was a familiar sound of the early morning, long ere the children were up. Foreign help had less sway in the kitchen than now, and European hands did not make a batch of such purely American dishes as pumpkin pie, codfish cakes, pork and beans, corn bread, buckwheat cakes, and succotash. People then did not live as long, nor was the average health as good as it is to-day; they ate more meat, more grease, more hot bread, more heavy dishes, drank more at meals and afterward chewed more tobacco.

Dyspeptics and consumptives were more common; disease and premature death were devoutly laid at the Deity's door and alluded to as "dispensations of Providence." Tombstones had larger epitaphs and more verbosity engraved upon them. At funerals the undertakers cried with the mourners—the flow of tears being proportionate to the expense of the funeral.

Coffins were very plain and burial caskets unknown. Young folks in couples counted it a privilege to sit up nights with the corpse before burial, and in many cases it was a welcome recreation. New Orleans molasses, very black and thin, was the common "sweetener" for buckwheat cakes. Refined molasses was comparatively scarce. The bank bills were of state banks, and the farther west their locality the slankier were they. Illinois and Indiana bills would barely pass in New York city.

Much of the silver currency—six-pences, shillings and dollars—was of Mexican coinage, bought to this country by the Santa Fe traders. The country retail trade was better than now. People then could not so easily by rail run up to the city and spend their largest cash accumulations for the more expensive stuffs. The country dry goods stores renewed their stock from the city twice a year. The arrival of "new goods" created quite a flutter. It filled the store for two or three days, until all the women in the village had seen the new styles. Eggs were a stalling a dozen and butter was considered high at 18 pence per pound.

There was "York currency," being 8 shillings to the dollar, and New England currency, 6 shillings to the dollar. Business letters were more voluminous and formal than now, and written in a precise, round hand. Isolated rural settlements contained a greater proportion of lunatics, paralytics and victims of St. Vitus' dance, than they do to-day. The railroad had not strung places together, and there were fewer hospitals for special diseases, hence most of their cases were kept at home. The diet was more surcharged with grease. The winter breakfasts at thousands of tables consisted of salted ham and hot cakes.

Dinner was simply a hasty lunch at noon. Little importance was attached to the necessity for good digestion or a period of rest after eating. The same heavy diet prevailed in many families, without change, winter and summer. Hence on the first approach of the warmth of spring came "spring fever" and biliousness. For this the doctors of the period gave strong emetics, possibly a "blue mass pill" or a dose of "calomel." The regular profession then used mercury in a manner which would now be deemed reckless. The patient was given a regular purgation and directed to "diet" for a few days. Children were strongly dosed with castor oil, and rhubarb, and salts and senna on the least provocation. It was a strong age for medicine and an age of strong medicine. Under such treatment the strong managed to recover, the weak died, and the medium class physically lingered on and suffered.

Lightning rods made their way into use with difficulty. The ultra devout actually opposed them on the ground that they were an insult to the Deity, and that it was an interference with the works and will of Providence. Negro minstrelsy was just cropping out in the traveling circuits. There were generally two performers, who assumed male and female characters. The popular melody was "Jump, Jim Crow."

England's Hunting Season.

[Frank L. Jarvis in The Current.] No sooner does the welcome item in the yearly calendar inform the world of Britain that the season for the legal slaughtering of game has commenced, than politics stagnate, the oracles of the law slumber, business becomes a bore, and from the crowded metropolis a general stampede begins. Every feudal castle, mansion, manor house, country seat and hunting lodge become scenes of life and jollity. He is the richest and most coveted nobleman who has the best stocked preserve, and is a simple country gentleman who is a good man in the field, who can beat a stable field, raise a covey of birds and use a double barrel right and left with unerring aim, stands on a higher pinnacle than the most subtle intellect, the brightest imagination or the most copious flow of eloquence.

Exact Ezekiel's Moral Proverbs.

[The Century.] The devil never was known to play any kind of a game, or capt to keep his word, or forgive, and doesn't forget. He is trying to settle with the Lord for 50 cents on the dollar. The man who has nothing but honesty to recommend him is sure of a reward hereafter, but he can't get a job here on earth. Men will swear by their religion, will fight for it, will be martyrs for it, will persecute others for it, will do anything and all things for it, except to serve it themselves.