

# BILLY DORR'S LAST CHANCE

By George Baker Hoyt

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SHIRLEY and Conant were lunching together, and Hammond chanced upon them in the midst of the meal. Conant pushed a chair out with his foot and said, "Sit down."

Hammond accepted the invitation, and when he had given an order he remarked that he had just met Billy Dorr.

"How's he looking?" asked Conant.

"Mighty bad," replied Hammond. "He's got consumption; that's a fact about him. He's just found it for sure. Doesn't seem to care a continental."

"Well, I shouldn't think he would," said Shirley. "He's got a little to lose as any man that I know if he dies."

Hammond pulled the ends of his long light moustache in a somewhat nervous fashion. Meanwhile he eyed Conant, who was the sort of man before whom one does not care to exhibit sentiment.

"Billy has had a blasted hard life," said Hammond, as if finally compelled to express his thought. "He's never had anything but sorrow and the devil's own tough luck. All his people are dead—parents, brothers and sisters—the whole tribe. He's seen 'em morn down as if with a scythe, by Jingo! And he's just had to stand and take things red-hot off the pitchfork as fate handed them out to him. I've always taken it for granted that that was what he was made for. But somehow while I was conversing with him this morning it all came over me. What a thundering hard life it is that he is going to lay down! What a story to read the end of, in the midst of the hopeless pain that he must suffer!"

"He may get well," said Shirley. "It would be like Billy's luck."

Conant took a long, slow drink of a thin, sour wine which he always ordered. Then he shut his lips in a straight, hard line and opened them at last to speak his mind. "You'd better go to get that we make up a purse for Billy Dorr," he said. "I won't come in. The one thing devilish that Billy Dorr has escaped in this world is debt. I won't load it on to him now that he's coming to the end."

"Besides," added Shirley thoughtfully, "he wouldn't take the money. I've tried to lend him some more than once. No ex. And if he would accept it when there was a chance of his paying it back you can bet your hat that he won't do it now, when there's none."

"But he hasn't got a cent," said Hammond, "and he'll have to stop work pretty soon. It seems sort of hard that a fellow shouldn't have his living assured—while he's dying."

"What did Billy Dorr ever ask you to do for him?" demanded Conant.

"Nothing, so far as I can remember," answered Hammond, "except to put up the money to start that crazy publication scheme of his. As a business man I couldn't do that."

"Nor I," said Conant, "as a business man. And yet I can do it. Hammond, you go and find out whether Dorr is really as sick as he thinks he is; whether he's checked clear through. If he is, he'll reach his final destination inside of six months, and that's a certainty. Now, it will cost us about \$3,000 to start that scheme of his and run it until—until he's gone. That will be our maximum net loss, for of course we'll start very slowly and waste as much time as we can. Besides, there's the chance that we can sell out after Billy's gone on a bluff that the thing's a success and thus get a good part of our money back. I'll bet that the whole game won't cost us over \$500 apiece. You may count me in for my share anyway."

The other two men exchanged a glance.

"It's a go," they said.

After luncheon Hammond called upon Dorr's doctor and succeeded in getting an opinion that would have satisfied the most impatient of Dorr's enemies.

"He's gone," said the doctor. "It's largely the fault of the life he's been leading—poverty, discomfort, hard work and worry. There's no defective heredity; he had a fine pair of lungs to start with. But disease is a fight between a man and a germ, and if the man's had condition he loses; that's all. Speaking in strict confidence and in view of the peculiar circumstances, I'm willing to tell you that Mr. Dorr has lost the battle."

In accordance with this opinion Hammond made his report.

"Murdered by tough luck, combined with a little bad bedroom and a gas stove," said he. "That's what I gathered from the medical gentleman's remarks. We want to put Billy in better quarters right away."

The next morning Dorr received a note from Conant inviting him to his office. When he arrived, prompt to the minute, Conant pretended that he had heard nothing of his illness; wouldn't believe that it was serious, scouted the idea that Dorr was going to die. And then he plunged into business and announced his readiness to back the new publication.

Dorr had always had an extravagant estimate of Conant's judgment. Conant's previous rejection of the publication scheme had been the only thing that had ever shaken Dorr's faith in his money-making possibilities. He had endured bitter hours of discouragement as a result of that first interview. And that Sam Conant should have changed his mind at last was like having the whole world set right after it had been unaccountably going wrong for a long time. In the face of such a revolution Dorr began to believe that he was going to get well, since Conant said so.

It was no part of Conant's plan to hurry matters. He had counted upon a considerable delay at the start. He said to Dorr:

"You go away for a month or two and get into condition. Meanwhile we'll engage offices and gradually get things together, so that when you come back we can push right ahead."

But Dorr wanted to go right ahead and do business. It appeared that he already had his eye upon some offices for the publication, and Conant was unable to say why they were not the most suitable and economical, that could be had. Moreover, Dorr had all the details of typesetting, paper and presswork at his finger ends, and he showed Conant very excellent reasons why the contracts should be made at



She was adjusting her hat.

once. As for going away, he laughed at the idea. "Other men may have time to waste," said he. "I haven't."

Conant began to perceive with great clearness that at this pace \$3,000 would not cover the loss; but, being in, he did not know how to get out. Before the work was over the partnership had been definitely formed, an account had been opened at a bank, the offices had been engaged, and Dorr was deep in negotiations with his printer.

"He's carried us a little off our feet," said Conant to his fellow conspirators, "but he can't stand this gait, poor fellow! He'll break down, and then we can get him away and slow up a bit."

The prediction proved true within a month. Dorr had worked night and day, dealt with remonstrances and the most direful word pictures of his approaching end, and his strength had been sufficient to uphold him. He was laid flat on his back.

The result was that the able editor of the new publication agreed to go to a sanitarium up the state for a month, but meanwhile the first number had been announced, and it had to be issued. It was a foolish little paper, designed to interest women especially and to deal with frocks and frills and the gossip of pink teas. But there was a really new idea in the manner of presentation, and Dorr would have staked his life upon its success if he had had a life to stake in any proper sense of the language.

With the second number the assistant editor had to struggle, assisted by the triumvirate—Conant, Hammond and Shirley. They endeavored to knock a little sense into it in the firm belief that they had been any in the first issue. They also put the brakes on to some of Dorr's circulation schemes, which were even sillier than the matter in the paper and threatened to cost too much money.

One of the chief features of the enterprise was a unique and ingenious plan for getting gratuitous contributions of short articles for publication from a most extraordinary list of women prominent in various walks of life. The trouble with this plan, in the opinion of Dorr's associates, had been twofold—first, the people wouldn't write the stuff, and, second, if they did write it and send it in it wouldn't be good for anything.

In the matter of contributions for the first number both these predictions seemed to be fulfilled. Very little manuscript was received, and Dorr himself admitted that the quality was poor. A day or two after the first number's appearance, however, there was a remarkable increase in the quantity of these contributions, but the quality, in the opinion of the assistant editor and the triumvirate, was indescribably worse. All but a scrap or two went into the wastebasket.

When a copy of the second issue reached the sanitarium where Dorr was staying, it was 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The next train for the city left at 1:25, and Dorr took it. He arrived about 4 o'clock, weak, pale and excited. The triumvirate was in the office, consulting with the assistant editor and one of Conant's clerks who had been transferred to the publication as business manager, when Dorr burst in upon them with a copy of the paper in his hand.

"This won't do," he gasped. "This won't do at all. You don't get me out of this office until this thing is on its feet. Blast it all, do you think we're running the Congressional Record? Why, you've made this so heavy that I wonder it ever got through the mails. Lighten it up! Lighten it up!" And he fell into a violent fit of coughing.

They tried to get him out of the place and to bed, but wild horses couldn't have moved him. His eyes blazed with eagerness. There was a waste paper basket beside his chair, and it was full of matter that had been sent in by would-be contributors in response to Dorr's circulars.

"Throw all this away, did you?" he demanded. "Well, watch me!" He emptied the basket upon his desk and plunged vigorously into the mass of papers. He had his dinner sent in, and it was midnight before Conant, who had sat up with him, succeeded in dragging him away to a hotel.

Conant called for him at the hotel early next morning with dire apprehensions. He found Dorr weak in body, but strong in resolution. The day was very fine, with a crisp, dry air, and Dorr felt much better when he got out upon the street. He was full of his schemes for the paper and talked incessantly as they walked toward the office. There was a flush in his cheeks; he looked young and handsome, almost as Conant remembered him in years gone by.

"I think the fellow's gone a little off his head," was Conant's mental comment as he listened to the flood of bubbling enthusiasm. "But it doesn't really matter so long as he is happy."

Suddenly Dorr stopped and looked at his companion's arm.

"There's a mark on your arm," he whispered. "There's the woman! I can't let her go! I've been hunting for her ever since this thing came into my head. What shall I do?"

He whirled Conant around and dragged him rapidly up the street. They paused at a corner, and Dorr said in the other's ear:

"It's the one with the yellow hair, notebook and pencil in her hand. How can I reach her?"

"Don't you know her?" gasped Conant.

"Never saw her before in my life," replied Dorr. "But don't let that worry you. She can't look like that and not be the girl I want."

"Want?" echoed Conant.

"For the paper, of course," said Dorr. "She's a perfectly ideal woman for us. She's a mark on your arm! Underneath a mark, a yardstick, a thermometer!"

Conant was bewildered. He glanced nervously from his excited companion to the gentle and placid young woman, who had paused before a shop window and was adjusting her hat by the aid of the reflection in the glass. She was a sweet creature, with a beautifully tanned, serenely expressionless face, wide blue gray eyes and the daintiest mass of wavy, light colored hair. She moved on, entered a tall building, took the elevator to the ninth floor and went into a stenographic school, Dorr and Conant following her.

Dorr approached her with a quick, decisive manner, raising his hat as if in an ecstasy of joy. Before she was aware of his approach he had seized her hand against the safe.

"I beg your pardon again and again," said he. "But—but am I right in supposing that you are a stenographer?"

The girl turned toward him without the slightest trace of alarm. Her eyes were full of innocent curiosity, like those of a child whose confidence has never been abused.

"Yes," said she. "Why?"

"Then you give up every possible assurance in regard to a position, will you accept it?"

"I'm only a beginner," replied the girl. "I've just graduated from this school. Still, I'm quite expert. How did you happen to ask me about it in this queer way?"

"We are very much in need," replied Dorr.

"Isn't it strange?" said the girl, smiling. "I always have such good luck! It takes some of the graduates months to get a position, and I really hadn't begun to look for one."

"In addition to the stenography," said Dorr as he offered her his card, with a bow, "you will have certain editorial duties."

She laughed in the sweetest fashion. "Oh, goodness! she exclaimed. 'I couldn't be an editor. I don't know enough.'"

"Yes, you do," replied Dorr, with decision. "You know all that is necessary. Can you come to the office now?"

"Yes, certainly. I can begin work right away. Oh, I forgot to give you my card."

Presently Conant was presented to Miss Lucy Haven, and the three walked slowly down to the office. From the conversation it appeared that Miss Haven had been a year in the city, living in a boarding house and studying stenography. She was supported by a slender allowance from home and protected by her own angelic purity of heart and the luck which she had mentioned.

When they reached the office, Dorr had a great fat topped desk set in it. He put Miss Haven at one side of it and took his own place directly opposite.

"Now," said he, "I will edit this paper for you, as if nobody else in the world were ever going to read it."

Miss Haven could have had no very accurate comprehension of this as an intellectual proposition, but she caught the feeling, and her blue eyes lighted up with interest. It would be fine, she felt, to have a paper edited for her.

Conant took Dorr aside a little later in the day and craved an explanation.

"You don't regard Miss Haven as a 'front woman, do you?' he demanded. "I'm sure I never saw another like her."

"You never will," responded Dorr, with enthusiasm. "They are born only once a century."

"But why edit a paper for so unusual a creature?"

"She is unusual," said Dorr, "merely because she is the sublimation of all that is sweetest, best and most common in all good women. She is perfectly receptive and a fine judge of impressions. She separates all things in this life into good and bad. That is good which she likes and that is bad which she doesn't like. Don't you see that millions of other women must like what she likes? Can't you catch the great idea that is surging through my brain?"

This was too much for Conant, who walked away, rubbing his head. Dorr went back to the big table and said to Miss Haven:

"We will now get out the third number of this paper. Most of it is already prepared for the press, of course, but it will all have to be done over again—to suit you."

"You frighten me dreadfully," said Miss Haven, and she laughed very prettily.

They got out the third number of the paper together and the fourth. By the time the fourth was out it became evident that the third had made a hit. Conant, Shirley and Hammond read the paper prayerfully; they read it forward, backward and crosswise, and they couldn't see anything in it. They couldn't see a reason why a single human being should buy it, yet the circulation of the fourth number jumped in a way that was quite startling.

Then Dorr was taken down again. When he didn't come to the office one morning Miss Haven sent for Conant and said to him, with tears in her blue eyes:

"Conant went to see Dorr and packed him off to the sanitarium again."

"I'm willing to go this time," said he. "We're all right. We've got down to my idea. Just push my circulation schemes and leave all the rest to Miss Haven. Her judgment will be final—everything that you go into the paper."

For days indeed for weeks, thereafter Conant's most interesting occupation in life was to sit and watch Lucy Haven.

Conant looked at it with a sweet and meaningless smile, hesitated a moment and then lay it upon one pile or the other, according as it was accepted or rejected. When it needed to be changed she told the ex-assistant editor, now her subordinate, just what she wanted, and the poor fellow gnashed his teeth and did her bidding as hearily as he could. She was very happy. She would have liked to see Dorr, to see how happy than her smiles apparently. At such times she would say in response to a question:

"I was thinking of poor Mr. Dorr."

At the end of a month Dorr made a flying visit to the city. He had gained ten pounds and looked greatly improved, but he knew well enough that the ultimate result was still very much in doubt, with the balance of chances inclined toward the dark side. Therefore he had made a will disposing of his interest in the business. He gave this document, sealed in an envelope, to Miss Haven to be deposited in her private drawer of the safe. She was the sole legatee, but of course she did not know that. Such subjects were not upon her mind.

She was childishly glad to see Dorr, and she permitted him to take both her hands several times in the course of their first conversation. These were congratulatory handshakes over points scored by the paper. Some of these points were so utterly incomprehensible to a rational man that Conant, who was present at the enumeration of them, went out at last into the business office, where he said he felt like knocking his head against the safe.

Meanwhile Dorr and Miss Haven began to discuss the number that was under way, and the man deferred to the woman's judgment every time.

"Oh, dear!" she cried. "This responsibility has almost killed me." And she laughed merrily.

Then they resumed their editorial labors, Miss Haven slinging softly a foolish little tune.

Late in the afternoon Conant dropped into the office again and invaded the editorial room, where, to judge by their faces, Dorr and Lucy Haven were playing some sort of amusing game, while the assistant editor (an old news paper copy reader) writhed in agony at a desk in the corner. He was sprinkling punctuation through an article on "Temptations to Excess in the Use of Diamonds."

Conant dragged Dorr out into the business office and laid before him a statement that had just been made up from the books.

"We're on a paying basis," said he, "and with this new advertising that's coming in we'll be—"

"Paying basis?" echoed Dorr. "We've got our fortune here. I've been telling you about it for the last five years."

At the end of the week he went back to the sanitarium and stayed another month. When he returned his cough was quite gone, and he looked like a new man. Miss Haven said that she had been reading his work.

"We've got along beautifully," she said. "It seems to me that the paper improves all the time."

At this the assistant editor in the corner laid his head against the wall and feebly closed his eyes.

Conant when he came in was overjoyed at Dorr's altered looks.

"I don't believe you ever had any thing more dreadfully," he said.

"Don't know what I had," replied Dorr. "But I know what I've got. I've got something to live on and somebody to live for, and I've naturally decided to live."

"Somebody to live for?" queried Conant.

"Yes," said Dorr, taking him by the arm and leading him into a far corner. "She says she loves me, and we're going to get married. I'm going to get up," he added, with a laugh, "if she ever does."

"Well, I could almost hope she wouldn't," responded Conant, "for the sake of the business. How old is she now?"

"Twenty-two—God bless her!" said Dorr.

An Underground Confession.

Women are growing quite embarrassingly frank about the basis and the crown of their charms. On Saturday afternoon a pretty young married woman, with her five-year-old son—so much more could have been said—came into a first class carriage on the underground. After her came three friends, two girls and a man. "Yes, I'd never be without my wig," said the pretty woman. "It isn't as if I hadn't enough hair of my own. Celia can vouch for that." Celia nodded—we all looked for Celia's nod.

"Why, the other Sunday we were lunching at Wimbledon, one of those damp, misty days when the grass was there—with her fringe all over her eyes. Mine was all right, and yet Margaret had a maid and I haven't. I've worn a wig for three years, and I don't care who knows it." The rest of us—strangers—held our breath till the tale was told.—London Chronicle.

Pencil in the Handkerchief.

It is a fact of grave sanitary importance whether the handkerchief does more harm than good as it is ordinarily used. When we assume that the healthy nose does not need to be wiped we face a reasonably broad proposition as to the danger of the handkerchief as a disease propagator. Most of nasal catarrhs are of an infectious character, notably those of grip origin.

Contrary to a general law of a sepsis, the handkerchief saturated with disease germs, instead of being promptly washed, is stowed for hours in the pocket, with a result that can be easily imagined. Is it any wonder then that catarrhs are constantly fostered by a system of auto-infection?—Medical Record.

Webster Was Willing.

When Daniel Webster's market man had sued him for a long unpaid bill and got his money he was so scared at his temerity that he stopped calling at the door for orders. The godlike Daniel asked him why one day, and the man confessed that he supposed Mr. Webster would never trade with him again. "Oh," said Webster, "as you are often as you like, but for heaven's sake don't starve me." There was never a time when the great man was not willing to owe as much as anybody was willing to let him owe.—Springfield Republican.

## WOMAN AND FASHION

A Beautiful Hat.

This picturesque hat is made of plain black velvet with the brim bent in the most artistic curves. The sole decoration is a very long white ostrich plume in the new lyre shape, which is arranged so as to fall down over the shoulders in the back.



BLACK, WITH WHITE PLUME.

The Season's Sleeves.

The sleeves of the new dress waists deserve an article all to themselves. As one woman of fashion remarked: "The only distinctive feature of most of the new waists is the sleeves. Otherwise they are all alike as two peas."

In the main, the sleeve arrangements are an outlet for her taste and originality. There are bell sleeves with under puffs of lace or chiffon, sweeping angel sleeves and bouffant sleeves with long and slender cuffs. This latter style is perhaps the more feasible for daytime wear. The big puffs are far enough from the hand to prevent unbecomingness, while the deep cuffs accentuate the curves of a pretty arm. In most cases these bouffant sleeves are tight fitting above the elbow and thence widen suddenly to remarkable proportions. The tight fitting effect above the elbow is often obtained by a deep sleeve cap, which may be a continuation of the trimming across the blouse front.—Washington Star.

Novel Costumes.

One of the novelties of the season is the tailored costume in heavy silk, stitched and pressed and treated like cloth. One of these costumes in plum color is trimmed with plum colored cloth straps running up and down the skirt between broad belt plaques. There is a plaited bolero, with a collar and girdle trimmed with a cloth band, which are stitched and ornamented with fancy braid having a touch of gold. Another walking costume of steel colored cloth has a skirt and short tunic trimmed with stitching. There is a box plaited blouse somewhat like a tunic, although the two pieces are separated by a broad belt of soft gray leather. There is a deep shoulder collar embroidered in chenille, and the cuffs, trimmed to match, are both broad and wide, with hemstitched ruffles of linen. This somber gray is very fashionable, and some of the gray costumes are made with double breasted fronts to the long jacket and trimmed with passementerie ornaments.

Fashionable Foot Gear.

Fashionable foot gear indicates that the toes are becoming narrower and the heels higher and that with the decline of the vogue of the coat and skirt the mannish looking shoe is passing out of favor.

Most shoes for smart wear have a glossy finish. There is a decided liking for those which are strapped, and some of the prettiest foot gear of the moment consists of little groups of straps fastened to soles, an arrangement which sets off pretty and dainty stockings, but should be on no account adopted by women having clumsy looking feet.

A pair of the moment is to have Oxford shoes laced with ribbon. Soft ribbon will pass easily through the eyelets, which are made a little larger than usual. Large, rather flat buttons are seen on some of the smartest glaze kid boots, and they look very smart.

A Pretty Shirt Waist.

MADE WITH LAID ON TUCKS.

The illustration shows a pretty shirt waist of ring dotted velvet, having laid on tucks of plain material and Persian band trimming.

The Cashew Nut.

The cashew nut serves a unique purpose as a cosmetic in the West Indies, where women desiring to remove excessive tan anoint the skin with an oil from the outer surface of the raw nut. For two weeks the patient must retire from society, for the face and hands so treated turn black. At the end of a fortnight's seclusion, however, the woman who has undergone the cashew treatment emerges, observers state, "with skin and complexion as fair as a babe's."

## THE DEATH CUP.

This Deadly Fungus Resembles Several Edible Mushrooms.

Perhaps the most deadly of the poisonous fungi of our woods and fields is the fairly well known death cup (*Amanita phalloides*), particularly dangerous from its resemblance to several of the edible mushrooms, though gathering fungi for the table should be undertaken by none save those thoroughly acquainted with the different species, as it is altogether too easy for the ignorant enthusiast to make an error which may prove fatal to his friends.

The death cup referred to has a round cap, white, yellowish or greenish in color, and the stem has a swollen base, surrounded by an envelope, or veil, of a white flimy substance, which parts as the stalk extends upward. This stalk is pithy when young, but hollow at maturity, and the gills of the cap, which in the meadow mushrooms are pink or brown, are white in the deadly variety, as are also the spores, which can be plainly seen if the cap is laid, gills downward, on a piece of colored paper for a few hours. The swollen, or bulbous, base is a distinguishing characteristic, and no fungus of that appearance should be gathered for cooking. One of the liabilities is that these caps may be broken off without due observance of its base, which is often covered with earth or dead grasses, hence not distinguished from some of the legible, which, however, are never surrounded with the flimy veil of the death cup.

The poisonous property of this fungus is largely the same as that found in the venom of a rattlesnake and also in cholera and diphtheria, and so far science is unable to produce any satisfactory antidote, atropine, the stomach pump and oil purgatives being about the only resources.—Washington Post.

ENGLISH AS SPOKEN.

It is in Scotland, Says a Critic, That It Is Heard at Its Best.

The query "Where is the prettiest English spoken?" is answered by a writer in the London News, and, strange to say, it is not in England, if the writer be accepted as an authoritative critic.

It was the opinion of Sir Morell Mackenzie that those who should speak English most musically were the inhabitants of Badenoch, Inverness-shire, Scotland. They had the reputation for centuries of being perfect speakers of English; but, the writer says, he must now go to the glens branching northward from the Caledonian canal to find the language spoken in its purity.

"In the beautiful glen of Moriston in particular one has noted the most exquisite speech it seems possible to imagine. There is an almost total absence of dialect and vocal disfigurements, though a quaint, delicately marked rise and fall of the voice are very faintly noticeable. The language used is extraordinarily pure and free from alien words, which is attributable to the fact that the people acquire their English direct from books and that so far dialect contaminations have not penetrated the glen."

The writer has a good word to say of Celtic pronunciation of English generally. "The charm of Irish English is undeniable. It has a softness that appeals irresistibly to the ear, but unfortunately it is linked with a certain element of dialect which just places it below perfection."

Pocket Furnaces.

Curious hand furnaces are used in China during the winter months, chiefly in the north, when the fire, in place of being in the house, as we have it, is carried about the person beneath the thickly padded cotton garments or in the hand. At times it is placed beneath the chair on which one is seated. This contrivance, resembling the charcoal pans formerly used before the days of the pit coal by the Hertfordshire straw platters, was first introduced to our notice when resting at a village in the Fukien province, which, before we had investigated the cause, we noted as a place remarkable for the deformity of its inhabitants, old men and women with strange swellings projecting in the most unaccountable places. Our speculations were, however, speedily set at rest and the matter satisfactorily explained by an old gentleman, who removed his greatcoat and disclosed a small copper furnace and neatly covered with basket work. This artificial mode of heating the body is only resorted to in time of extreme cold, as on ordinary occasions the people deem their thick clothing a sufficient protection during winter.—Golden Penny.

His Own Manuscript.

George Ade, in the early days of his career, before the "Fables in Slang" had brought him fame, called one morning in Chicago upon a Sunday editor on a mission from a theatrical manager.

"I have brought you this manuscript," he began, but the editor, looking up at the tall, timid youth, interrupted:

"Just throw the manuscript in the wastebasket, please," he said. "I'm very busy just now and haven't time to do it myself."

Mr. Ade obeyed calmly. He resumed: "I have come from the—"

and the manuscript I have just thrown in the wastebasket is your comic farce of 'The Erring Son,' which the manager asks me to return to you with thanks. He suggests that you sell it to an undertaker, to be read at funerals."

Then Mr. Ade smiled gently and withdrew.

A Judge of Human Nature.

"Doctor, tell me honestly whether my health is improving or not."

"My dear sir, you're getting on famously—famously!"

"You are not speaking the truth, doctor, but I can tell without your assistance whether I am getting better or not."

"How can you judge?"

"By the behavior of my hairs."

Reframed.

Mrs. Nurritch—I think I'll take this bracelet. Are you sure it's made of refined gold?

Jeweler—Oh, yes.

Mrs. Nurritch—Because I do detect anything that isn't refined.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Work is the soft, fame the entree, fortune the roast and oblivion the dessert of most lives. There is no cordial.

## SIGNS ARE OLD.

In Ancient Greece They Were Used as Business Houses.

The custom of marking a business house by means of a sign is of very ancient origin. In the great cities of the east and among the ancient Egyptians such a practice must have been unnecessary, as all trades were classified and confined to certain sections of the city, and then all wares were exposed to full view, as they were displayed in open bazaars.

The history of Grecian signboards is meager, yet the allusions of Aristophanes and Lucian to signboards warrant our belief in their use by the Greeks. Athenians tell us, "He hung the well known sign in front of his house."

Advancing to Roman times, there is abundant evidence of signs, as the discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum amply testify. In the Eternal City some of the streets derived their names from signs, just as hundreds of London streets have been so named. The Roman street *Vicus Ursi Pileati* was named from the sign, for, as the name indicates, it was the street of "The Bear With the Hat On." But it was not until late in the fifteenth century that the custom gained a footing in England, first of all among the taverns and alehouses. Later came the necessity of distinguishing between certain shops brought about by the fact that the houses were not numbered and the people could not read word signs.—Julian King Calverton in St. Nicholas.

See Jumping.

The great event of the sneaking clubs of the western states is the jumping contest. Only a skee runner knows the sensation. Below, the endless miles seems to stretch on forever into the expanse of the valley, the steepness of the incline lost in its whiteness. A long breath and you start. Faster and faster you go till suddenly a flash of green in front, and the jump of it is coming. Crouching until your knees almost touch your shins, with muscles strained, out into the air you sail!

A strange lightness and feebleness take possession of your limbs, and your spirit shares the intoxication of soaring into space. After long seconds you are called back to earth, first for half a second softly, but then hard as iron that seems to give you an electric shock. You wobble helplessly from right to left; each foot seems glued to the ground and still in the air, but you have kept your balance and are shooting forward. At last you catch your first breath, like a hicough; then a longer one. You are drenched in the sweat of a jump of a hundred feet or more, and finish the victorious course in a neatly rounded curve—Country Life in America.

A Weird Incident.

Some years ago the following strange incident took place in a west end club: There lay on the table in one of the rooms a list of members who had put down their names for an approaching house drink. A workman on a ladder, who was putting the finishing touches to the decoration of the ceiling, fell a single tiny splash of red paint, which dropped on the first name on the list and obliterated it as if with the stroke of a pen. Some of the members who noticed this occurrence thought it a very bad omen; others, like Hamlet, defied anxiety. But, equally enough, the member whose name had thus been struck out was taken ill the next day and died in the club on the night before the dinner was to have taken place.—Golden Penny.

Valuable Shares.

The shares of the New River corporation are the most valuable in the world, and only fractions of them usually come upon the market. For many years the shares were sold at 25 apiece, and indeed Charles I. reassigned his king's shares to the company in return for a perpetual annual payment of £500, which sum, under the style of the "king's cloz," is still paid. How had a bargain that was shown by a dividend for years past having averaged over £2,000 per share, while a few years ago one of the shares was sold for £122,000 by public auction. The actual face value of the shares is £100.—London Standard.

A Quaint People.

The heart of Brittany never changes, but its face is rapidly losing many of its prominent characteristics with the leveling influence of the French republic. It is only far out of the beaten track, now, or on special occasions, like fetes, that you see universally the costumes and customs of the old Armorican peninsula. Only an hour's journey from Quimper, the modernized chief town of Finistere, and you are among the Rigoulines, a people whose dress suggests the Eskimos and Chinese, whose faces are strongly Mongolian in type and who in language, customs and beliefs seem to have no relation with the rest of France. More and more the picturesque problems they present in coming to attract attention. Artists, students and tourists alike are fascinated by it.—Andre Saglio in Century.

A Stickler For Rank.

It is not in this country alone that the notion of equality prevails. The London Figaro reports the following instance:

As a magnificent steamer, the property of the Peninsular and Oriental company, was steaming into Southampton harbor a grimy coal lighter floated immediately in front of it. An officer on board the steamer, seeing this, shouted:

"Clear out of the way with that barge!"

The lighter man, a native of the Emerald Isle, shouted in reply, "Are ye the captain of that vessel?"

"No," answered the officer.

"Then spake to yer equals," said the lighter man. "I'm the captain of this."

Reframed.

Mrs. Nurritch—I think I'll take this bracelet. Are you sure it's made of refined gold?

Jeweler—Oh, yes.

Mrs. Nurritch—Because I do detect anything that isn't refined.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Work is the soft, fame the entree, fortune the roast and oblivion the dessert of most lives. There is no cordial.