BARNEY'S REDEMPTION

By A. W. WHITEFORD

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WITHIN six hours after the new general manager issued his famous "dry" order it was the most discussed subject on the division. The first thing the men had to decide was why it had been issued, and the reasons they advanced were almost as varied as the men themselves. Some claimed that it was because he had lost the contract for carrying the Consolidated Brewing company's Kansas and Iowa shipments; others asserted just as positively that it was because he would not believe the "fog" explanation for the last head-end wreck, in which two of the largest compounds on the system had been put out of service, while the balance contented themselves with sarcastic allusions to his "prohibition tendencies" and his "devotion to principle." But on one point they all seemed to agree, and that was that it was entirely too severe.

"To think," said Barney McDonald as he stood in the midst of a group of engineers and firemen just outside the roundhouse office, "we are not even to be allowed to go into a saloon. I wonder where he thinks we intend to get our checks cashed. Maybe he intends to furnish a traveling identifier so as to enable us to walk into a bank like respectable people and have some young snipe of a clerk ask us to swear that we are the person named on the check. No, sir," he continued emphatically, drawing himself up to the full height of his six feet four; "not if I know myself. I've had my checks cashed in saloons for the last twenty years, and I've never been drunk yet, and I'll do it again, too, if I feel like it, orders or no orders."

After the first wave of excitement had passed and the obnoxious order had been accepted as a fact speculation became rife as to who would be the first victim, for it was a generally accepted fact that at least the first offender would get short shrift for the sake of example. For the next week or two, therefore, everybody was particularly careful as to where his inclinations led him, and if there was any imbibing it was done so much on the quiet that not a soul could swear to having "seen" anything.

The first pay day, however, saw Barney true to his threat. With his check in his hand he walked straight from the pay car to the nearest saloon, called up the house and defiantly threw down the little piece of paper with the order to "take it out of that." That the local officials took no notice of this was probably due to the fact that they knew he was only bluffing, although it might have been better if they had, for with him it was but the beginning of the old, old story. Flattery was finally the means of his undoing. The admiration of his companions, either real or pretended, for the boldness he displayed soon had its effect. Such remarks as "You're too good a man, Barney; they can't afford to lose you," turned his head. From a steady and reliable workman he became first careless and then reckless.

Nor was this the worst. To every man who openly admired his nerve or praised him for holding on to his rights he considered himself in duty bound to show his daring until it came to a point where he never made a trip without taking a drink. Some of the cooler headed ones soon saw how things were going and tried to drop a word or two in his ear, but he quickly advised them to take as good care of their own business as they did of other people's and then see how much better off they would be. It came at last, however. After an unusually lively afternoon he started out on No. 23, as usual, but he had gone beyond his limit, and the motion of the engine soon got in its work.

When he ran the Rock Island crossing, the fireman began to suspect what was wrong and decided to keep an eye on him, but when he tried to make the stop at O. and came to a standstill at the pump house, about two and a half miles down in the hollow, the entire train crew knew that the jig was up. The conductor was compelled to report the occurrence, the investigation was held the next day, and, as the trainmen put it, "Old Barney gets his six months twice a year."

In a short time Barney and his family moved to N., a little town about seventy miles out from headquarters, where his wife's folks lived. Here he made his living as best he could, driving a team, working on the streets or doing anything in the line of odd jobs that he was able to pick up. He made no effort to get back on the road, not even to the extent of circulating a petition for reinstatement. He realized that he had made a mistake and was honest enough to accept the full limit of his punishment even to the extent of keeping away from the depot as much as possible, in order to avoid meeting the men who went through on the trains. But his love for the old life still continued. Twenty years of continuous service on the road fits a man into a groove from which he finds it impossible to extricate himself. He talked but little about railroad matters, but every item was as eagerly devoured and every change as readily noted as though he were still in the service.

When the news reached N. that the Iowa packers were going to make a test between his old road and the Midland to decide who should get the Chicago shipments he was among the first to hear it, and no one wished more sincerely that his road would win. It was to be a great race. Ten cars of meat, all loaded in the same make of refrigerators, were to be delivered to each road at the western terminus, and whoever landed them in Chicago first was to get the contract for the next three years. The rivalry between the two roads had always been of the fiercest sort. This was due to the fact that as they lay so close together it was no trouble for shippers to transfer trade from one to the other, and the nip and tuck scramble for the local business kept all the division points at a fever heat.

As Barney figured it, the chances in the coming test were about even. Taken altogether, the Midland had perhaps a few less miles of track, but it had more hills. On the western division it had the advantage, but on the eastern division it was the other way. The real test would come over the middle division, and whoever got into headquarters first would undoubtedly win the race.

As the appointed day drew near, Barney's interest increased to such an extent that he decided to overcome his scruples for once and go down to the depot with the crowd. That the racing train would not stop he was certain, for he knew that these clear track orders respect nothing but water tanks and coal chutes, with perhaps an occasional railroad crossing, and as the town possessed none of these his only satisfaction would be a glimpse of yellow paint as the refrigerators flashed by, but he considered this much worth the effort.

When he reached the platform, which was already well filled with people, he found them all discussing the one subject. Men who had never set foot in an engine cab were busily engaged showing just how the Midland was going to get beaten, while an equal number of others, possessed of an equal amount of knowledge, were showing how it was impossible. Some were betting on the time that would be made, others on the amount of meat carried, and still others were telling just how much the lucky road would clear on the contract in the next three years.

Barney took no part in any of these discussions, but stood quietly at one edge of the crowd waiting patiently for the first sound of the train's approach. In a short time his trained ear detected the unmistakable rumble, and soon a thin column of smoke appeared far down the track, and in another moment the whistle sounded. As the train came up by the lower switch he could see that steam was shut off with the evident intention of stopping. "That's queer," he remarked to himself as he took a step or two nearer the track. "I wonder what's wrong."

The crowd, too, had noticed by this time that something was the matter, and they began pushing and scrambling in a wild endeavor to reach the the agent's window just as the train came to a standstill, with the engine even with the depot. It took but a moment for them to learn what was wrong. The engineer, overcome with the heat and the strain of the excitement, had given out and was unable to go any farther.

The conductor held a hurried consultation with the agent. "I'm afraid the contract's lost," he said gloomily. "They told us when we took water at P. that we were just about even, but here we are, laid out, and not an engineer within forty miles. I'd run her myself if I thought I could make it, but I guess you might as well tell headquarters we've lost the heat."

But the agent, whose eyes had been wandering over the crowd while the conductor was talking, suddenly caught

With his check in his hand.

sight of Barney and replied quickly: "There's Barney McDonald. Why not give him a chance? He used to be able to turn them fast enough."

The conductor glanced in Barney's direction. "It's worth a try," he said.

It took but a moment to call Barney to the engine. The conductor hurriedly explained the situation, winding up by saying: "Now, get up here and take the train in. I'll be responsible for everything, but I'll guarantee that you never need worry if you only get there on time."

Barney's railroad training came to the front on the instant. He knew there was no time for haggling or explanation. He merely said, "All right; I'll do it," and swung himself up into the cab. A gleam of his old time spirit came to his eye as his feet touched the deck, and it was with almost childish eagerness that he picked up an oil can, jumped down and began to "oil round." He hurried from one side to the other, feeling her boxes, touching up her links, dropping a splash or two on her guides, and in an instant was back in the cab, and they were started.

"She's a bird," he remarked to himself as they began to leave the town behind them, "and brand new. Her drivers must be at least seven feet high, and that tank holds over 4,000 gallons. We've lost twelve minutes," he continued as he hooked her up a notch and gave her a little more steam, "but unless I'm mistaken this is just the sort of a mill that will make it up. We've got coal enough, and we've only got one stop to make for water. It's a good seventy miles, but an hour and a half ought to get us there easy."

That he had forgotten nothing of his former skill was soon evident from the way the train was handled. He knew every foot of the road from one end of the division to the other, and as each familiar landmark was reached and passed his every move clearly showed that he was still the Barney of old. The curves were approached with just enough caution to keep her inside the limit; the hollows were gauged to a nicety; she was held up at just the proper instant on the hills and dropped to her place at the right spot on the hills until her speed became something terrific. The fences seemed to be vanishing into the earth, the telegraph poles went by like wisps of straw, the trees that lined the right of way blended together until they resembled a moving sheet shaken by the wind, an occasional horse or cow flashed by like a dancing dot on a moving screen, and one town after another was reached and passed like pictures on a revolving panorama. But on the engine there was little opportunity to put in any time admiring the scenery. The fireman kept his place in the middle of the deck and only let go of the shovel long enough to shake a grate or work an injector. The brakeman, for once without kicking, was cracking coal mile after mile without so much as looking up, and, as for Barney, he simply sat tight, one hand on the throttle, the other fingering the brake valve and his eyes glued to the strips of steel that seemed to be hurled at him like two streaks of gray colored lightning.

"We ought to catch sight of them at B.," he remarked as he looked at his watch. "They'll have to stop there for water, too, and it's whoever gets away from there first that wins out. At this rate we'll have that twelve minutes made up by that time, and if they don't get their water first our chances are as good as theirs."

But as they approached the town of B. things looked black for their chances. The town was in the midst of a level stretch where the two roads ran parallel and in sight of one another for more than two miles. The two water tanks were scarcely more than a hundred feet apart. As Barney's engine came into the town limits he could see the Midland standing at the water tank, the fireman up on the back of the engine tank, with his hands on the spout, ready to throw it free the instant the tank was full.

For one instant Barney hesitated, then shut off to make the stop. "Only twenty miles in," he muttered, "and this stop means ten minutes. I guess we're up a tree." But the next instant he turned to the fireman for the first time since they had started.

"Hey, Billy!" he called out sharply. "Run back and see how much water we've got!" Billy needed no second bidding, but grabbed the broom on the instant, ran back over the coal, jerked off the manhole plate, reached down and touched the bottom of the tank with the end of the broom handle, and then, holding it up so that Barney could see how much of it was wet, he called out:

"Only about thirteen inches. We'll never be able to make it with that."

But Barney appeared to be satisfied, for he turned around, gave the throttle a jerk that brought an angry snort from the engine, and in another moment they had passed the water tank and were flying on through the town, leaving the Midland crew gaping at them in open mouthed astonishment.

"How in"— began the fireman as he got back to the deck, but Barney interrupted him with: "Here; take her a minute, and don't ease her up either. We've got one chance, and only one, and we're going to take it."

As he stepped down from the seat he picked up the coal order book, scribbled hurriedly on it for a moment with the stub of a pencil he found in it, tore out the page and handed it to the fireman with the remark, "Drop that to the operator at H." Then he turned, picked up the end gate and coal pick and started back over the coal.

Still at a loss to account for his movements, the fireman glanced at the message he held in his hands, but it brought no light to his mind. All he could make out was, "Wire headquarters to have the south yard section gang on the lookout for fire on the track and have the ice house track clear, ready to load a ton or two when we get in." He was enough of a railroad man, however, to know how to obey orders, and in far less time than it takes to tell it he had folded the paper, weighted it with a small chunk of coal and turned to watch Barney.

As the engineer reached the back end of the tank he jerked the lid off the manhole and then took the end gate and slipped the upper crossbar over the brake rod on the first car in such a manner as to allow the bottom edge to be directly over the manhole. This done, he picked up the coal pick, took a firm grip on the brake rod, braced his feet for an instant on the end gate and swung himself up on the roof of the car. In another moment Billy understood at least a part of the message. He was going to get a water supply from the ice boxes in the refrigerator.

Entirely unassisted and with only the coal pick for an ice hook Barney hauled up the big 200 pound cakes out of the ice box, ran them along the running board till they reached the end of the car, then gave them a lick or two with the pick, and down slid the pieces into the tank. Although they were running fully fifty miles an hour, he worked just as swiftly as though they were standing still. Not a lick was missed, and not a cake got away from him. When the box at one end of the car was emptied he ran to the other end and began on the second one. When that was emptied he climbed down upon the tank, took off the end gate, dropped the lid over the manhole and came back into the cab.

"Now shut off your overflow," he said as the fireman yielded up his seat. "Throw your tank valve over and open your injector throttle. We've got to get steam enough into the tank to melt that ice. I put in fifteen cakes. They're good for twenty gallons apiece. I guess that will let us in. In fact, it's got to," he continued as he glanced at the steam gauge, "for we can't spare steam enough to melt any more."

From then on not a word was said. Barney took his place on the seat box, the fireman kept his eye on the water glass, and the brakeman looked after the coal. The steam soon melted the ice, and the water ran as free as ever. Mile after mile rolled by.

The last twenty miles were soon reduced to fifteen. The train's speed never slackened for an instant. Fourteen miles—thirteen! They were using lots of water, but the injector still worked smoothly.

Twelve—eleven—ten! It was beginning to suck a little. Nine—eight! It was hard work now to get it to take hold. Seven—six! Billy put it on this time as they shot down "Middleman's drop," and when, about half way down, it broke with a roar he knew that there was not another drop of water in the tank. The glass was a little more than three-quarters full and five miles to go.

Barney set his teeth together a little closer as the space at the top of the recording glass began to lengthen. Two-thirds, and over three miles yet!

Half full—three inches! The strain was beginning to tell. A look of despair began to settle on the fireman's face, but Barney only gripped the throttle a little tighter and leaned a little farther forward. Two inches—one and a half! Only one inch left, and they were still two miles out! How long would the boiler stand it before bursting? The fireman began to wonder how it would feel to be suddenly lifted clear off the right of way, and the brakeman started to edge toward the gangway. In another moment the water was out of sight in the bottom of the glass.

Even Barney could now feel the cold sweat start out all over him.

"Turn your grates, Billy!" he shouted. "Drop your fire in the ash pan and shake it out on the track!"

Billy understood the other part of the telegraph message now, and he went to work with a will. In a few seconds there was nothing visible in the bottom of the fire box but the slowly cooling grate prongs. A mile and a half yet! The steam gauge was beginning to quiver. A few rods farther and it had gone back five pounds.

At the mile they were down to ninety, at the half only forty; at the quarter they had scarcely twenty-five pounds. But the momentum of the train was enough. In another moment they were in the yards, and the race was won.

They needed a switch engine to set them in on the siding, but as they saw the new crew take charge, the fresh engine coupled on, the ice boxes refilled and the train off for Chicago fully five minutes before the Midland whistled for town they did not mind being dragged around as a "cripple," and they immediately set to work to see how much damage had been done.

"Never even bulged the crown sheet," said the boilermaker whom Barney persuaded to examine the engine's interior. "It took the lead pretty well out of the soft plug, but it won't take long to fix that. I don't think the boss 'll say anything about it."

The general manager didn't say much either. There was no gold watch presentation, no eulogies were offered and no speeches made, but Barney McDonald pulls the fast mail today over the middle division and obeys orders strictly. He considers that dry order one of the best ever issued.

ENGLISH RED TAPE.

Censure For an Officer Who Saved Money For the War Office.

A zealous young officer in South Africa who had a knowledge and love of farming made his men collect oats which fell lavishly by the wayside as column after column carrying out hay passed up country. He plowed some land, sowed his oats and eventually reaped his harvest. This harvest, which was a heavy one, saved the country at least £2,000. But when his accounts were sent home the officials at the war office could not understand how they had come by something for nothing. Such a thing had never happened before. They impugned his motives and accounts, and the least of the charges brought against him in a long correspondence was that he had looted the oats. Months passed, and still the young officer had not been able to convince the war office that he was honest. Then a well known general intervened and testified that he himself had watched the experiment in farming by which the country had been saved a considerable sum of money. At last the war office ended the correspondence. Nothing that had been insinuated was withdrawn, although nothing was pressed further. The officer is left with the correspondence on his hands, and any one reading it could not hesitate to pronounce it as being in effect a severe censure.—Manchester Guardian.

THE QUEER MOROS.

Some of the Peculiarities of This Left Handed People.

To judge Moros by inflexible occidental standards of motives and morals is to lose at once the key to the situation. The very structure of their language differentiates them from ourselves. Verbs are in the passive voice. The man who was slashed and killed provoked the trouble. The under dog in the fight is always the aggressor. The thief is not blamed for "finding" things lying about at loose ends; the man who lost the property is the real criminal—besides, he is a fool. If he were a sensible man he would have exercised vigilance against the approach of the thief. Moros reverse everything. Like all orientals, they venerate the past and their folklore; myths and legends abound in tales not unlike those of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment."

They turn to the left of the road, extend the left hand naturally in greeting, and the scribes write from right to left, turning the paper sidewise, as any left handed man would do.

A witty officer explained that the preference for the left was due to the desire to keep the right hand free in the event a stranger should need something done to him. The "explanation" may not be far from the truth.—Chaplain C. C. Bateman in Journal of the Military Service Institution.

The Defiant Drummer.

"It was right funny," said Uncle Hosea, telling of the orchestral concert. "A smart Aleck lookin' feller set in the middle, an' all ter oncet the little man at the end o' the line hit the big drum a sassy rap. Well, the smart Aleck feller shakes a little stick at the drummer, an' what does he do but hit her up ag'in jest ter show he was as good as the next man. An', by Jinks, he didn't take no back talk—or, rather, no orders—from the smart Aleck man, because he just kept a-whackin' that big drum in spite o' the boss' a-shakin' that stick, as if ter say he'd catch it if he didn't quit. Yes, sir; I gloried in his spunk, if he was little. An' at the end o' the tune he whooped it up on that drum harder than ever. A little man for nerve every time."

WOMAN AND FASHION

More Than a Hint of Summer.

There is more than a hint of summer in this white voile with its off trimming in guipure of different kinds. The loose Eton falls free over the silk belt, the guipure being disposed in

IN SHIMMERY VOILE.

revers style. The sleeve is very full from the shoulders to the deep cuff, the latter reaching to the elbow and decorated with a double ruffle of lace. The skirt is laid in deep plaits stitched down over the hips and flaring broadly to the tucked hem.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Walking Skirts.

Exit the short, plain walking skirt, if it must go, but enter the short, elaborate walking skirt. Women are at last awake to the fact that it is the length, not the elaborateness, which is a crime on the street and that a much trimmed skirt provided it clears the ground by several inches, elbow sleeves and an ornate bodice are correct, even economical, for certain kinds of wear. The discovery has brought with it a blessed relief, and the woman who feels gaucherie in an elaborate street gown outside of a carriage is throwing this feeling gleefully to the winds.—Boston Advertiser.

Popular Materials.

English suitings that give a mannish effect are displayed in many shades and are not only serviceable, but quite handsome, when used for the tailor made gowns.

Voile retains its popularity and is exhibited in all evening and street shades.

The louisine silks bid fair to meet with favor. They are shown in stripes and checks at popular prices.

Beautiful Embroideries.

Finest linens and linen lawns are most beautiful when hand embroidered. Much of this work, especially abroad, is done by the sisters in convents, who patiently work and work the fine threads into designs of such outlined beauty that women will rave over these embroideries and will pay famous prices to the convents for them.

Dress Trimmings.

Most of the new short skirts are trimmed with graduated bands of satin, velvet and taffeta. Fancy braidings are gaining favor among the tailors and, with embroideries, will be a feature of the early spring season. Thick, flat, wide military braids will be used and are very smart on cloth gowns.

The Lingerie Hat.

For the new shape in lingerie hat white crystalline is arranged in handkerchief points over the brim, these being edged with a narrow valenci-

A NEW SHAPE.

ennes lace. The crown is low and spreading, a thick ruching of black louisine encircling it, while a spray of white camellias is daintily posed in front. A bandeau lifts the shape off the face and is covered in white tulle. —New York Commercial Advertiser.

Smart Little Coats.

Separate coats are named as one of the innovations to come in the near future. Some very smart little jackets and blouses in black silk now shown in the shops may be looked upon as forerunners of this development. They are trimmed with lace, tucks or fancy stitching and are exceedingly fetching.

Connubial Bliss.

Brother—I trust that you are happy with your husband, Maud? Maud—Oh, yes, as happy as one can expect to be with a man who is talking of himself half the time and of his first wife the other half.

His Impression.

"Of course you believe that polygamy is wrong," said the man who was discussing the Mormon question.

"My dear sir," answered Mr. Meekton, "it is not only wrong. It's foolhardy."—Washington Star.

A GIANT OCTOPUS.

The Way a Thirty Foot Monster Came to Be Captured.

One of the most interesting objects in the Natural History museum in Trondhjem, Norway, is a large octopus. E. R. Kennedy, the author of "Thirty Seasons In Scandinavia," not only saw the octopus, but a little later heard the story of the capture of it, as related both by the fisherman whose boat it attacked and also by two independent witnesses. The fisherman was leisurely rowing on a calm day close to the rock bound shore of one of the fiords situated some fifty miles north of Trondhjem. Suddenly a long and glistening arm swept over the stern of the boat and remained there. The fisherman, astonished at this unwonted apparition, dropped his oars and sprang to his feet. Like magic another hideous looking arm shot over the gunwale. The boat canted. The man, realizing that he was attacked by some monster against which his old fish knife was the only available weapon, seized his oars and labored with might and main to get his boat into a crevice of the rocks, all the time yelling for his mates, who were not far off. He had to strain every nerve to drag his hideous cargo after him, for the suckers never relaxed. When, half exhausted, he got the bow of his craft within reach of willing hands, it took the three men to haul it up a slight incline, for the monster still hung on, even over the bare rocks. Then they belabored its head with oars and clubs. Having safely secured it, they sent off to the nearest station and telegraphed concerning their prize. It was at once purchased by the museum and carried there after it had been photographed. They stretched its arms out before preparing it. The longest were each five alen, or ten feet four inches, in length. Over all, together with the great carpet bag body, the monster measured thirty feet across.

BATH BRIEFS.

Never bathe when overheated.

Never bathe when exhausted and feeling ill.

Do not prolong the bath beyond a reasonable time.

Wait more than two hours after a meal before bathing.

In cold weather one should not go out for some time after a hot bath.

Delicate people had better not bathe until several hours after breakfast.

The temperature of water for a cold bath should range from 32 to 65 degrees.

If you are chilly and a cold bath makes you shiver it is not the best sort for you to take.

Dry the body quickly, using a dry bath brush or a Turkish towel to stimulate circulation.

Opinions differ as to the relative merits of a cold or a hot bath. Neither kind will do for all. The individual constitution must be consulted.

Unanimous.

The prisoner is led from his cell into the presence of his seven wives, for having which number he is about to answer to the law.

"John," cries wife No. 1, "see where your folly has led you."

In a dazed manner he looked at the array of women.

"How dared you?" demands No. 2.

"Wretch!" shout No. 3 and No. 4.

"Villain!" exclaim No. 5 and No. 6.

Nervously he clutches the arm of his guard.

"Have you no excuse, perfidious man?" demands No. 7.

Wiping his beaded brow with trembling fingers, he at length stammers:

"I—I—I must have been crazy."

"You certainly were!" agree the seven wives, each looking meaningly at the other six.—Chicago Tribune.

Magical Effects of the Sapphire.

To the sapphire has been ascribed the following magical properties: That it prevents wicked thoughts; that it is such an enemy to poison that if put in a glass with a spider or venomous reptile it will kill it. St. Jerome in his exposition of the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah says that the sapphire procures favor with princes, pacifies enemies, frees from enchantment and obtains release from captivity. This gem was sacred to Apollo and was worn when inquiring of the oracle at his shrine. It was esteemed as a remedy against fevers.

Sleeping In a Cannon.

The interior of a cannon is perhaps the last place in the world one would associate with a siesta, and yet India possesses a gun which is capacious enough to form a chamber where officers retire for a siesta during the heat of the day. This cannon, which is beyond question the largest in the world, is probably also one of the oldest. It was cast nearly 400 years ago by a famous chief of Ahmednugger, and came into English possession when India was conquered.—London Standard.

Glass Eyes.

The earliest notice of artificial eyes I am acquainted with occurs in a very rare work by the French surgeon Ambrose Pare, entitled "La Methode Curative des Playes et Fractures de la Teste Humaine," Paris, 1561. Pare gives a description and figures of artificial eyes to be worn in cases where the eyeball has given way and all the humors have escaped. They are to be segments of a hollow sphere, made of gold, coated with enamel painted in natural colors. With the exception of the gold, they are exactly like the eyes in use at the present time, which are made wholly of glass.—Notes and Queries.

Fortune Through Failure.

"I owe my success in life to politics."

"Why, I didn't know that you had ever held office."

"I never have, but I ran for office once and got so badly beaten that I turned from politics in disgust and took up the line that has brought me a fortune."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Too Violent an Innovation.

"You told me you had an original idea in your novel."

"I had," was the reply, "but the publisher discovered it in the proof sheets and made me take it out."—Washington Star.

HER PRECIOUS SPOONS.

She Used Them For Show at Luncheon With Disastrous Results.

Considerable quiet laughter has been going on among the guests at a luncheon given by a young West Philadelphia bride the other day to the attendants at her wedding. There had been among the hostess' presents at the time of her marriage a particularly beautiful set of spoons, and, while she had no occasion to use them at this particular luncheon, she thought that she would put one beside each cover for—well, just for instance.

Unfortunately, however, there was one stranger in the merry little company which sat down about the table, a pretty, outspoken, somewhat "gushy" young woman from the west, and it was she who caused all the trouble.

As the luncheon neared its end and it became apparent that the spoons were not for use she kept eying the one at her place, and finally she burst forth with this flash of inspiration:

"These spoons—what perfectly lovely souvenirs!"

The chorus of praise was immediately taken up by all about the board. The confused hostess found explanation impossible, and every guest went away from the house with one of those precious spoons.—Philadelphia Press.

GOING SCOT FREE.

The Source From Which This Old Saying Emanated.

The origin of the old saying, "Going scot free," is this: Scot, from the Anglo-Saxon "sceot," a portion, signified in old law a customary tax or contribution laid on subjects according to their ability and embraced all parochial assessments. The conclusion is obvious—namely, that to escape "scot free" was to avoid all such payments of dues and taxes.

Before the reform act the right to vote for parliamentary and municipal officers was vested exclusively in payers of "scot and lot." Rastall (1558) speaks of it as a certain tallage for the use of the sheriff or his bailiff, and in Kent the usual rates paid in Romney marsh for repairing sea walls are known by the same name.

"Scot," says Camden, "is that which from various sources is gathered into one heap"—literally that which is "shot" into a general fund, from the Dutch and low German "schot." This may have come to us through the old French "escot," diner a escot, to dine at an ordinary where each guest paid his "shot," and any one who did not contribute would be said to get off "scot free."—London Answers.

THE WORD HUMBUG.

There Are Various Plausible Explanations of Its Origin.

The word "humbug" has been traced back to the title page of "The Universal Jester, a choice collection of merry conceits, bonmots and humbugs, by Ferdinando Killigrew, London, 1735-40." The following are the most plausible and possible derivations:

In the time of James II. a worthless coin was minted at Dublin from a soft mixed metal, which became known as ulm bog, pronounced Ooombug—i. e., soft copper, worthless money.

Some see in it a corruption of Hamburg, from which town so many false reports came during the war of 1799-1806 that such news was received with "Oh, that is a Hamburg!"

Others refer it to hum, in the sense of hoax, and bug, in the old sense of bugbear. Others say it is merely hum buzz, used in combination to signify sound without sense. Others, again, think that it was first applied to Homberg, a chemist and an ardent seeker of the philosopher's stone.—Notes and Queries.

Butter as Medicine.

Butter is so common a commodity that people use it and scarcely ever think what wonderful value lies at their hands in the pats of dainty yellow cream fat. But this delicate fat is as valuable as the dearer cod liver oil for the weakly, thin people, and doctors have frequently recommended the eating of many thin slices of bread thickly spread with butter as a means of pleasantly taking into the bodily tissues one of the purest forms of fat it is possible to get. Butter is a carbon, and all excess of it is stored up as fat in the body. It gives energy and power to work to those who eat heartily of it; so it is not economy at table to spare the butter even to the healthy folk.

Finger Nails and Disease.

It is interesting to watch the history of a case of disease as recorded upon the finger nails. When we look at the patient's nails, we see on each of them a distinct ridge, showing that the portion of the nail which has grown since the acute attack is much thinned out. If a person has broken his arm within eighteen months, the ridges on the nails of the hand of the affected arm may be seen, while they will be absent on the other hand. The more acute the illness the sharper will be the ridge. Extreme anxiety and mental depression have the same effect on the nails as physical disease.

Right and Left Handed.

It is curious to notice the vagaries of humanity in cases where no hard and fast line has been already drawn. Although most right handed persons put on their coats left arm first, a considerable percentage thrust in the right first. Soldiers fire from the right shoulder, but sportsmen are found who prefer the left. In working with a spade a proportion of right handed men grasp the spade with the left hand and push with the left foot and right hand, though when using an ax the same individuals would grasp farthest down with the right.—Chambers' Journal.

How It Happened.

"Is it true, ma," asked the little rabbit, "that pa was shot by an amateur gunner?"

"Certainly not," replied the mother rabbit. "You see, the amateur gunner was shooting at me, while your poor pa sat behind him and laughed. Unfortunately the gun kicked, and the man sat down on your pa and killed him."—Philadelphia Press.