Second Cousin Sarah

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"ANNE JUDGE, SPINSTER," "LITTLE KATE KIRBY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

It was wintry weather down in Worcestershire, though the May of the year in which our story opens was already two weeks old. It was a late spring, the country people said, meaning that the hail, and sleet, and rain, and bitter east winds were still in the ascendant, and that there was not a glimpse of sunshine from week's end to week's end. Times were hard and business was bad, and people already croaked about the danger to the harvest. It was a world that shivered by the fire still, and waited for a change. Weather-wise folks looked up at the leaden sky every day, shook their heads and said "more wet"; and the wet came down as though they had asked for it, and washed out the energy from three-fourths of the human-kind in Worcester.

It had been raining all day in the loyal city, just as it had rained the day before, and the day preceding that. It was raining at ten o'clock in the evening in as vigorous and lively a fashion as though it had just commenced, and the wind had turned out with extra strength to add to the dark night's discomfort. Worcester had lost heart and given up and gone to bed, and at the railway station, where, by the tables, one could ascertain that a train was behind time by three minutes, there was a faint semblance of life, more depressing than the elements. There was one fly, with its driver asleep in the interior of his vehicle, and its drabby horse coughing like a man. There was a wet old gentleman, glittering like a beetle in his waterproof as he walked up and down, under the dim gas lamps of the station. There was a railway porter's head peering occasionally from a half-open door, and declining to allow its body to come forward until the glaring eyes of the engine were seen advancing through the miseries of the night; and there was a short, thin, haggard scrap of a youth, in tattered corduroys and a red comforter, curled up on a porter's truck, and sleeping placidly.

The train that was overdue was not calculated to rouse the officials into energy. It came from a dull, dead branch line, and was going on to Gloucester; it was not likely to land many travelers or take up many at that hour of the night. When it arrived at last, it came into the station noiselessly and in a spiritless condition, as though the steam were low and the engine-driver had just buried his wife, and only one bespotted window was slowly lowered in a third-class carriage, as the train glided to the platform.

From this window an ungloved hand and arm protruded and unlatched the door, and then a stalwart man of four or five and twenty years of age, a bright-faced, brown-bearded man, stepped out, dragged forth a portmanteau and a hat box, stood aside to allow of the brisk entrance of the man in the shiny waterproof, and looked around him in that half-sharp, half-vague manner common to individuals who find themselves in places that are new to them, or have changed much since their last farewell. The guard banged the door to, the engine gave a melancholy wail, and toiled on with it burden; the youth in corduroys sat up on the barrow and stared at the portmanteau and hat box rather than at their owner; the fly-driver, who had roused himself, called out "Carriage, sir?" and not receiving a response, cut the coughing horse viciously under the chin with his whip and drove off at full speed.

The traveler, after a hasty glance at the sky, called out in a sharp, clear voice to the porter:

"I expected a carriage for me to-night."

"What sort of a carriage?'

"A private carriage from Mr. Culwick's, of Sedge Hill. Do you know Mr. Culwick by sight, or his coachman?"

"There has been nothing here but cabs all day—and there's nothing likely to come now, I reckon."

"Do you want anybody to carry your luggage, sir?" asked a weak voice, and the lad who had been dozing away time on the barrow obtruded in an edgewise manner into the conversation. The traveler glanced at him and said:

"It is too heavy for you, my man."

"No, it isn't," said the youth with alacrity. "I'm very strong; I have been waiting for a job all night, sir—if you don't mind, sir—for I'm very strong, I am, indeed!"

The eagerness of the request, the reiteration of his powers, the contrast which his words presented to his white cheeks, and eager, dark eyes, attracted anew the attention of the gentleman for whom no carriage had arrived, before the railway porter turned upon the applicant.

"You get out of this, young shaver; you've been here a sight too long already," cried the porter, "and I've had my hi on you these two hours. It's no use your hanging about as if——"

The boy cowered for an instant, and then turned quickly on the man.

"And I'm very strong, sir," he urged again; "may I try? I'll carry it easily; see now!"

The portmanteau was raised and flung upon his shoulder, the other hand caught up the leather hat box, and the white face looked round the burden inquiringly.

"Where to, sir?"

"To Muddleton's Hotel."

The youth strode into the wind and rain, and then the traveler, after giving a tug to his cap, put his hands in the pockets of his coat and followed his guide across and out of the station yard. The youth turned a corner with the luggage, and the proprietor found him leaning against the brick wall of a house when he had turned after him.

"Which way, sir?" he inquired.

"Which way!" echoed the stranger; "why, straight along there. Don't you know the way?"

"Can't say that I know much about hotels—I haven't been at this kind of work a great while, sir."

"How long?" inquired the traveler, somewhat curiously.

"Three hours and a half."

"Come, that's perseverance, if we take the weather into consideration. You are the lad to make your way in the world, in good time. Three hours and a half. What have you been doing before this?"

"Nothing particular."

The lad trudged on. He wavered more in his gait, and splashed the legs of his companion with superfluous mud and water; and the man walked by his side, studying the roadway and unobservant of the failing efforts of the weak boy whom he had intrusted with a heavy task.

"Who are you, boy?" he said, without looking up. "What have you come to this sleepy city for?"

"I—don't know," was the reply, and a more sullen reply it was than usual, despite its jerkiness.

"Have you run away from home? Is that it?"

The man looked at the lad at this query—looked with a grave earnestness that betokened a keener interest in him than he had hitherto shown.

"If that's it, we are in the same boat, boy," said he. "I ran away from home ever so long ago."

"Because——" said the lad, curious in his turn, and even stopping short for an instant for the answer.

"Because there was no place like home!—no place so confoundedly uncomfortable, and unsympathetic and hard-cornered—and so I put on my hat and walked out. And yet, after all—" he paused and made a clutch at his portmanteau, that he suddenly thought was in peril of slipping from the lad's shoulder—"Here, hold hard, youngster; what's the matter?"

"It's all right, let me be; I can carry it. I said I could," cried the boy, with excitement, and marching himself and luggage away from the touch of the elder man. This sudden effort seemed too much for the overtaxed strength of the porter; he reeled away toward the footpath, and went on with weak and tottering legs for a few moments, when he suddenly collapsed.

"You are ill—you are hurt," said the man.

"No; let me be. I shall get up in a minute. I'm a little bit giddy—the street turned round all of a sudden—but I will go on with the luggage presently."

"Oh, no, you won't," said the man, dryly; "you should have never attempted it. I was a brute not to see—the boy's going to faint."

He put his arms round him and lifted him into the doorway as he might have lifted an infant, and looked again at the white, wan face under the old Scotch cap.

"Poor little beggar!" he muttered; "why did I load him like this, and loaf along by his side. Here, what's your name? Can't you open your eyes, just for a moment, till I——"

Here his anxiety took the form of action, for, still holding the boy's head on his shoulder, he kicked with energy at the door against which he was leaning, and awoke the whole house.

A snuffy old woman, in an old black cap weighed down by grimy artificial flowers, was the first to wrench open the door; she had been sleeping by the fire, sitting up for a late husband, and she appeared with a bound on the doorstep, and nearly fell over the strange couple in her haste.

"Water—a glass of water, please," cried the traveler. "This child has fainted."

"What—who—water—whose child is it?" she called forth. Then she realized the urgency of the case and ran back into the room, returning very quickly with a light in one hand and a glass of water in the other, at the same time as heads peered down the narrow staircase, and some one opened a window above and asked twenty questions in stentorian tones, without getting an answer to one of them.

"You can come into the house, if he ain't going to die, mind you," said the woman. "Has he been run over?"

"No—crushed, that's all. Give me the water. Take off his cap and then let him be. He will get the air that way."

The Scotch cap was twitched off, and the woman and the man who was supporting the lad leaned forward and stared with amazement at two small side-combs which were in the head, and which had been used for fixing and drawing up beneath the Scitch cap a profusion of raven hair.

"Mussy on us, it's a gal!" cried the old woman. "Why, what's her game?"

"Ay, what's her game?" said the man very thoughtfully, as he echoed back the slang question of his interlocutor.

The girl heaved a deep sigh, and put thin hands to her head, as if she missed her cap already.

"She's been shamming," said the old woman, who had grown strangely uncharitable within the last few moments.

"She will do if we can get her home," said the traveler. "Are you better?—how do you feel now?" he asked kindly.

"I'm all right," was the slow answer; "I—I—think so. What has been—the——"

Then she stood up slowly, with her hands pressed to her temples, glared from the traveler to the woman with the light, gave a faint little scream of surprise, snatched suddenly at the cap dangling from the fingers of the woman, and with one wild spring forward, passed from them into the rain and wind, and vanished away in the darkness.

The traveler made one or two strides after her, and then stopped.

"Why should I follow her, and annoy her further?" he said, as he paused.

He remembered that he had given his strange porter no remuneration for services thus abruptly terminated, and started off again; but it was too late, and another memory coming to him that he was leaving his luggage in the street, he went back for it, and discovered that it was being taken into the house by the Samaritans, with a certain amount of undue haste.

"Thank you," he said, politely. He shouldered his portmanteau, picked up his damaged hat case and marched off to Muddleton's Hotel, where the waiter received him urbanely, but was puzzled at the quantity of mud which he brought in along with his luggage.

CHAPTER II.

Sitting in the coffee room of Muddleton's Hotel, his slippered feet planted on the old-fashioned brass fender, the man who had come to Worcester thought out the incidents of the day, and sketched forth a map of progress for the morrow. Warm and dry, and at his ease, the wan face of the masquerader of an hour ago came before him more often than he had bargained for, the girl being apart from his life, and only a stray incident by the wayside of a career that had been eventful and varied.

He was a man of the world, and had seen strange sights and met with strange chances and mischances, and yet he had not been at any time more perplexed than on this night of coming back home. There was a stern story, he was sure, of much privation marking the life of that weak woman who had struggled into a man's dress, and hung about Worcester railway station for man's work and man's wages; and he had experienced privation himself, and lived it down in some degree, not losing sympathy with it, or growing callous to it. Perhaps it was on his conscience that the girl had toiled hard for a sixpence, and he had not rewarded her for her labor. He rang the bell and the waiter entered.

"If anybody should ask for me——"

"Yes, sir—what name, sir?"

"Reuben Culwick," he replied; "but he—she will not know my name. The party who helped me with my portmanteau from the station, I mean, and who left me in a hurry. She—he is aware that I am staying here for the night; therefore, be good enough to ask him—her—the lad, I mean, or whoever comes," he added with a dash, "into the room to-night or to-morrow morning. Do you understand?" he inquired, as the waiter listened open-mouthed to these rambling instructions.

"Yes, sir—perfectly. Anybody who comes, man or woman. Yes, sir," he said with great briskness.

"Stop one moment," said Mr. Culwick, as the man flitted toward the door; "I shall want a trap to take me to Sedge Hill, and bring me back to Worcester, at ten in the morning," and the waiter having withdrawn, he set himself to his coal-fire studies once more. The instructions which he had given had sufficed to turn the current of his ideas, and the adventure of the night passed away from his mind with the deeper thoughts that followed it.

"And return," he said, and laughed to himself more than once—and odd laughs they were, of various degrees of hilarity, from the hearty and unaffected to the laugh with the inner ring in it, the undercurrent, as it were, of something which was scarcely irony, and which might have been interpreted into a lurking sorrow or regret by any one who had known his history.

"Yes, Reuben," he said when, at a later hour, he was going upstairs to his room, "to return; positively the last appearance of Reuben Culwick at Sedge Hill. Will there be much of a crowd to see the gentleman under those interesting circumstances?"

He had made up his mind to solve the riddle quickly for himself, and at ten in the morning he was standing in front of Mr. Muddleton's Hotel drawing on a pair of gloves and critically inspecting the animal which the proprietor had harnessed to the dog cart. Reuben Culwick looked up and down the street, and thought of his little adventure in Worcester last night. The waiter, not too busy, was standing at the door, interested in the temporary departure of the customer, and Reuben turned to him.

"Has any one called this morning for me?"

"No, sir."

"If any one should call about helping me with the portmanteau last night, give—him—half a crown. And ask her to call again," added Reuben Culwick, as he sprang into the trap and drove off.

"Give him a half a crown and ask her to call again," said the waiter, looking after him. "He doesn't know what he's saying. The old man at Sedge Hill will never make him out. A regular Culwick he is, and no mistake about it."

(To be continued.)

A DAY, MORE OR LESS.

Crossing the International Date Line in the Pacific Ocean.

Few incidents of a trip to the Philippine Islands, which so many Americans now have occasion to make, are more interesting than the crossing of the international date line, that imaginary boundary where, in going westward, a day is dropped from the calendar, and in going eastward one is added. A California Congressman and his wife happened to reach it, on the outward trip, at midnight of July 3, so that they woke up to find the next morning the 5th, and that they had lost the national holiday for the first time in their lives. To have a September 23 for two days in succession on their return would, on grounds of sentiment, be an insufficient compensation.

The teachers who go out on the transports to the Philippines usually arrange elaborate entertainments to signalize the date line. One of their number is often dressed up as Neptune, and other characters follow in a procession around the deck. The festivities are made as fanciful as the resources and ingenuity of the party permit. Sailors on merchantmen as well as passengers on the fast mail steamers are accustomed to observe the day with some celebration.

One of the old governors of Massachusetts, on being asked to speak at a State normal school which he was visiting, submitted this conundrum, "Would a person who had traveled around the world 365 times in an eastearly direction be a year older than the records in the family Bible showed? If not, why not?" The governor explained that such a traveler would actually have lived one day more for each trip than the calendar showed as having passed.

In practice, the length of the trip around the world is such as to discourage most people from adding to their days by this roundabout process. Travelers between New York and Chicago are constantly having days of twenty-three or of twenty-five hours, according to the direction in which they are going.

Like the boundaries of our standard time-belts on this continent, the international date line has been so drawn as to occasion the least possible inconvenience. It deviates from the one hundred and eightieth meridian enough to leave all the islands as well as each continent wholly on one side or the other.

DAIRY SCHOOL ON WHEELS.

Woman Makes a Success of a Unique Butter-Making Enterprise.

A traveling dairy school, conducted by a woman, was one of the rural features during last summer in Nova Scotia, that ancient land of Evangeline. Miss Laura Rose, a graduate of an agricultural college, is in charge of the school, and great success, it is reported, has attended her efforts to teach farmers' wives how to improve the quality of their butter. Every farmer's wife who can possibly do so attends it when it stops in her neighborhood, and an officer of a local agricultural society said that Miss Rose did more in a two days' visit to his part of the country than could have been effected by years of incessant writing in agricultural papers, instructions from butter dealers and public lectures.

Miss Rose travels with her dairy in a big covered wagon, taking with her from town to town a couple of churns, a separator, a butter worker, a milk tester, tinware, salt, butter color and, in fact, everything which is necessary for the manufacture of first-class butter except the cream, which is supplied by the agricultural societies. She did the same work for the province of Cape Breton last summer, and her dairy school is unique in Canada. There have been other traveling dairies before, it is true, but the instruction has heretofore been given by means of demonstrators, which are never so satisfactory, it is said, as work actually done by the pupils themselves.

New Rice-Growing Territory.

There is a marked increase in the growth of rice in Texas and Louisiana, so marked that the industry is spoken of as being transferred from the South Atlantic States to this new territory.

Patience is the king of content.—Mahomet.

OLD FAVORITES

Robin Redbreast.

Good-by, good-by to summer!
For summer's nearly done;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun;
Our thrushes now are silent,
Our swallows flown away—
But Robin's here in coat of brown,
And scarlet breast knot gay.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
Robin sings so sweetly
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts;
The trees are Indian princes,
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
The leathery pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough;
Its autumn, autumn, autumn late
'Twill soon be winter now.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And what will this poor Robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheatstack for the mouse,
When trembling night winds whistle
And moan all round the house.
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow—
Alas! in winter dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer
—William Allingham.

Abide with Me.

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comfort flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou, who changest not, abide with me!

* * * * * * *

I need thy presence every passing hour
What but thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting, where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies!
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!
—Henry Francis Lyte.

GAUDY BIRDS OF ARGENTINA.

They Abound There in Great Numbers and Most Brilliant Varieties.

The birds of Argentina abound in great numbers and variety, and they are among its greatest and most attractive treasures. One of the peculiarities of these birds is their gaudy, variegated and brilliant plumage.

In color they are beautiful and in songs wonderful. Let us go to the woods bordering the river and see how many we can find. Yonder bird is called the "arm of fire," on account of his bright color. He appears to take great pride in showing himself. There is the cardinal with the scarlet crest, white breast and dove-colored back, also the yellow cardinal with yellow body and black crest. It is so named because its crest resembles the cardinal's hat. That beautiful pink line that you see in the daintiest sky is a flock of pink flamingoes. They are nearing us. Now they alight upon the sand on the margin of the river. How pretty they are! Listen to that exquisite song. That is the "bugero," a large black bird with white beak. From the grassy marsh comes the discordant cry of the heron, and the green parrots are chattering in the trees over our heads. They think their scolding will frighten us away. See that lovely golden wren creeping up the tree, hunting spiders. He does not seem a particle afraid of us. Hear that sweet-voiced robin. They are much finer singers than the robins of our country. Here we find a dove's carelessly made nest, with two white eggs lying on the ground. This dove is very small, not much larger than a canary. That modest little gray bird is the bulbul or nightingale, which keeps his sweet song for the night.

There is a tree that appears to be covered with balls of cotton, but instead of cotton it is a flock of magpies sunning themselves. They drop their wings and fluff out the feathers of the back until they resemble balls of cotton. They are singular birds. One will catch a frog and run around before the others, apparently to tantalize them. When they bathe they jump into a pool of water, then out and roll in the dust, then into the water again. They impose on each other by several hens laying eggs in the same nest.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF FREAKS.

Specialty Which Proves Lucrative to the Photographer.

Not far from Cooper Union is a photograph gallery devoted almost entirely to freaks. Sometimes a few pugilists get in there, but as a general thing they patronize a shop kept by an ex-pugilist a little farther down the street.

In the freaks' shop you will find at almost any hour of the day giants and dwarfs, skeletons and fat men, human pin-cushions and sword swallowers—in fact anything that is included in the museum and circus line, on exhibition from 10 cents to $1. Nothing in the way of a legitimate freak escapes. But once let an outsider—that is, a man whom the patrons of the show do not consider a genuine freak—get in there, and he gets no picture.

The photographer began with picking up chance freaks in the circus about ten years ago. He personally sought out freaks and took commission on the number of photographs sold in the shows. The freak photographer doesn't do that now. He knows that he has a facility for photographing freaks better than anybody else, just as others excel in sporting scenes and some in handsomely gowned women. Every man, of any good, in every profession has his strong point; and that man's is in posing freaks to the best advantage.

His name is on pictures sold in freak shows in New York or anywhere else this side of San Francisco. His bank account would compare favorably with the bank accounts of many fashionable photographers.—New York Times.

QUEER STORIES

The limit of a soldier's credit at the canteen was twenty per cent of his pay.

Americans are making an effort to establish a steel plant at Flushing, Holland.

The proportion of policemen to population is one to 307 in Paris, one to 408 in London and one to 458 in New York.

American tourists annually spend abroad an average of $75,000,000, and foreign tourists leave about $20,000,000 here.

The editor of a weekly newspaper in Australia offers himself as a prize to the woman who writes the best essay on the duties of a wife.

Goose quill pens and drying powders are still used in English law courts and the House of Lords and in the French Chamber of Deputies.

John Stuart Mill was studying Greek at three, had practically mastered the language at seven, and a year later was acting as schoolmaster to his younger brothers and sisters. John Ruskin actually produced a manuscript work in three volumes before he reached his seventh birthday.

In Haroldswick, in the Shetlands, a whalebone viking drinking horn in good condition was found recently in a grave that contained human bones, together with those of horses and dogs. The grave is probably that of a sea king, buried with his horse and a dog in the time of Harold Harfagr, one thousand years ago.

A pre-historic town near Adichanallar, India, proves to have been of large size, and promises to yield an extraordinary variety of interesting objects. More than one hundred acres have been reserved for explorations, and the remains are found considerably beyond that area. About 1,000 curious objects of bronze, iron and pottery have been unearthed already, together with seven oval-shaped ornaments of pure gold.

TOO MANY EVAS AND TOPSIES.

The Great Remenyi's Experience at an Uncle Tom's Cabin Play.

It was while playing a concert engagement in the lumber town of Manistee, Michigan, that Remenyi first saw a performance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." At the hotel he met the enterprising manager of this multiple Topsy-Marks-Eva aggregation. The manager treated him with the most genial professional courtesy. He placed at his use one of the two tiny, lace-curtained boxes, which were the awe and pride of the theater's patrons.

The parade of blood hounds, the donkeys, and perhaps the brass band that mangled Sousa's music with such conscienceless exhilaration, excited the curiosity of Remenyi. He consulted with other members of his company, and it was at last decided to begin the concert sharply on time, cut all encores and to have carriages in waiting to convey them hurriedly to the theater at the end of the concert program.

The manager of the theater promised "to hold the curtain" for so distinguished a guest. And thus it was that the great Hungarian violinist was enabled to witness the great American classic. The concert audience was inclined to resent the rush until it became acquainted with the reason, and then was generous in forgiving.

The Uncle Tom actors worked right on their mettle. They did their best "to hold the mirror up" to their idea of nature, but the double reflection rather mystified Remenyi. It took him some time to fathom the philosophy of twin Evas, Markses and Topsys. The tears ran down his cheeks when Eva died, until he suddenly remembered the other Eva who had appeared earlier in songs and dances. With a puzzled air he turned to one of his companions and asked how they were to manage this dual personality under such trying circumstances. The friend replied that the other Eva had probably washed up and gone back to the hotel and would take her turn at the "gates ajar" the following night.

Later when Remenyi met the flushed and happy manager in the hotel office, he said thoughtfully: "Americans are very enterprising. They believe in having all they can of a good thing."

Birds Plant Trees.

An old time Arizona woodchopper, according to the Indianapolis News, says the birds have planted thousands of the trees now growing all over Arizona. These birds have a habit of burying small seeds in the grounds with their beaks, and they frequently bury large numbers of the small pine nuts in the ground, many of which sprout and grow. He was walking through the pines with an eastern gentleman a short time ago when one stuck its bill into the ground and quickly flew away. When told what had happened the eastern man was skeptical, but the two went to the spot and with a knife blade dug out a sound pine nut from a depth of about an inch and a half. Thus it will be seen that nature has her own plan for forest perpetuation.

Large St. Louis Hotel.

The Bonaparte Hotel at St. Louis will be the largest hotel in the United States, and its opening will be simultaneous with that of the big exposition.

It sometimes happens that the man who has a wife and an automobile has two unmanageable things on his hands at once.

A man who is looking for trouble can usually find it without trouble.

SUPPOSE WE SMILE.

HUMOROUS PARAGRAPHS FROM THE COMIC PAPERS.

Pleasant Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that Are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that Everybody Will Enjoy.

Mother—I don't hear the canary singing this morning, Osten. Is he in a good humor?

Osten—No, mamma, I think he's in a pet.

Mother—You do?

Osten—Yes, the Persian cat swallowed him.

Then He Ran.

"George, you don't love me any more."

"Oh, yes, I do."

"Then, George, you have been deceiving me. Last night you said it was impossible to love me any more than you did."

"Well, er—confound it, then I don't."

"Oh, George, how can you! Boohoo!"

Getting On.

Well, Tommy, how are you getting on at school?"

"First-rate. I ain't doing so well as some of the other boys, though. I can stand on my head, but I have to put my feet against the wall. I want to do it without the wall at all."—Punch.

Lesser Evil.

"Ma," wailed the small boy, "I've lost two teeth, a lock of hair, scraped my shins and tore all my clothes up."

"What have you been doing, sir?" demanded the angry woman. "Tell the truth."

"F-fighting."

"Oh, well, it's not so bad. I thought you'd been playing football."

A Long-Felt Want.

Casey—Oi see there's bin another railroad wreck due to an open switch.

Cassidy—Ay, 'tis a pity some wan don't invint a switch thot'll stay shut whin its open.—Philadelphia Press.

More Proof.

Ernie—Some learned professor tells us that sunspots cause people to lose their tempers.

Ida—I don't doubt it. I saw several girls the other day who were mad as hornets because they had freckles.

One Drawback.

"'Tis love that makes the world go round," whispered the pretty girl as she nestled closer.

"Yes," sighed the young man as he glanced at the time, "and it seems to make the hands of the clock go around, too."

Platform Repartee.

"Did you ever see a chimney sweep?" asked the solemn man with the black cane.

"No," responded the conductor of the car, "but I've heard a college yell."

A Clear Conscience.

"You are accused of running the end of an umbrella in this man's eye. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty, your honor; the umbrella doesn't belong to me."

No Laughing Matter.

"I thought you would surely laugh at that little joke," said the humorist, as the editor solemnly glanced at the manuscript.

"Not me," rejoined the man behind the blue pencil, "I never laugh at an old friend."

Crazy Enough.

"Yes, if I do say it," said the conceited fellow, "she's crazy for me."

"How unnecessary," remarked Miss Sharpe, "you don't require any assistance in that direction."—Philadelphia Press.

Two of a Kind.

"A man needn't be afraid of lightning so long as he can see it approaching," said the would-be humorist.

"Same way with a bullet," observed the solemn party with a far-off look in his off optic.

Light Indeed.

"And after the elopement," he whispered, tenderly, "we will go to light housekeeping."

"Lighthouse keeping!" she echoed, innocently. "Then all we'll need will be a big lamp."

Obtuse Brilliancy.

Julia—Is Clementine really so intellectual?

Aurelia—Oh, yes; she never can tell you a thing any other woman has on.

One Definition.

"Papa, what is alimony?"

"My boy, it is the price set on a man's liberty."

Reversed.

"What is the difference between me and a prisoner on a pirate ship?" asked the man who was placing boards along the slippery stone walk.

"Give it up," responded the other suburbanite.

"Well, I have to plank the walk and he'd have to walk the plank."

Easily Explained.

Teacher—Where is your brother this morning, Tommy?

Tommy—He fell in a barrel of cider and hurt himself.

Teacher—How could cider hurt him?

Tommy—It was hard cider, ma'am.

What the Homely Bachelor Says.

"Mamma," asked small Floramay, "what is 'single blessedness?'"

"Single blessedness, my dear," replied the knowing mother, is a "bouquet that a bachelor throws at himself when he wants to marry and can't."

A Bright Thought.

"Yes, ma'am," said the obsequious grocery clerk to Mrs. Bridey, who was ordering her first bill of supplies, "I've put down parlor matches; what next?"

"Well—er—I suppose I ought to have some kitchen matches, too, oughtn't I?"

Nightly Occurrence.

Teacher—What is this word?

Tommy—I don't know, ma'am.

Teacher—What does a gentleman remove when he enters a house?

Tommy—Well, if ma is awake pa removes his shoes.

Scathing.

Angry Patron (to waiter)—Here! Take away this lobster. Why, it's as old as I am.

Very Appropriate.

"Did you hear about Lever? Went fast to sleep while speeding in his automobile."

"Yes, and he slept like a top."

"How was that?"

"Spinning."

Dinner Repartee.

"Ah, this spring chicken is a toothsome morsel," said the sweet singer.

"Excuse me," said the comedian boarder, "but it cannot be toothsome."

"Why not?"

"Because chickens have no teeth."

An Unreasonable Request.

Wife (timidly)—Can you let me have a dollar, dear?

Husband (testily)—No, I can't. Haven't I just spent $2,300 on an automobile?

There's Something in the Wind.

Shelling the Parquet.

"How was that play, 'The Fall of Santiago'?"

"Great! The shells fell among the audience."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, the gallery boys were eating peanuts."

The Absent-Minded Beggar.

She—My sister is coming out next week.

He—How long was she sent up for?—Cornell Widow.

Perhaps He Was.

"Who was that young man hugging you last night?" asked the girl in the new fall hat.

"Oh, he is a book agent," responded her chum.

"Looked to me more like a press agent."

Dead Easy.

"How," asked the very young man, can one tell when love is only platonic?"

"When it develops into the other kind," replied the charming widow, "one can look back and see the difference."

It All Depends.

"How gratifying it must be," said the sentimental youth, who had the matrimonial fever, "to be the owner of one's own little home."

"Yes, it's gratifying enough, I suppose," rejoined the man who had just failed in business, "but it's a whole lot safer to have one's wife own it."

Old as the Scissors.

"Telegraphing without wires is no new thing," remarked the gray-haired passenger.

"It isn't, eh?" queried the drummer.

"Not by a jugful," continued the old man. "Why, sir, when I published a newspaper forty years ago I got nearly all my telegraph news that way."—Chicago News.

Didn't Escape.

Von Blumer—"I had the most singular thing happen to me the other day. Did you ever go into a man's place to pay a bill you owed him, and find him out?"

Plankington (emphatically)—"No, sir. Did that happen to you?"

"It did. I had a notion, or rather I nerved myself up to it, to settle up some bills that I owed. So on my way form the office I dropped in to see my fish-monger."

"And he was out?"

"Correct. Then I tried my grocer."

"He was out?"

"Right. Plenty of shopmen, but no proprietor. Of course, I left word that I called in to settle up, but wanted to see the proprietor first. Dispute about bills. Do you twig?"

"Oh, yes, that strengthens your credit."

"Exactly. Then I called to see my butcher, and I'll be hanged if he wasn't out also!"

"By Jove! but you were in luck!"

"No I wasn't."

"Why not?"

"When I got home I found them all waiting for me."