The Observer.

MORO, OREGON :

FRIDAY.....FEB. 8, 1907

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The Hunchback

[Copyright, 1906, by Ruby Douglas.]

In the year 1865 there landed in London from New Zealand a hunchback named George Melville, aged twenty-four. He was not only a hunchback, but there was a cast in one eye, he was almost bald, and his voice was as harsh as a raven's.

How Melville became possessed of a large sum of money was another matter that was never fully explained. His arrival in London was one of the most brazen things a man ever did. He had a dozen forged letters, and, giving out that he was immensely wealthy, he rented a large house and installed himself and began to mingle in society. He was called "delightfully eccentric," his gross ignorance was termed "picturesque," and inside of a month he had the run of three or four clubs and had been taken up by society.

He determined to marry. Perhaps he fell in love, perhaps not. At any rate, he selected the daughter of a member of parliament and made love to her so fast that she was swept off her feet and gave him her hand.

A certain widow not yet thirty years of age had set her cap for Melville, and when she had made sure that she had lost him she determined on revenge. She had a cousin who was an officer in a certain regiment then stationed in England, and she knew he had served in New Zealand. She went to him for information, and the cat was soon out of the bag. Captain Burton had read and heard of the millionaire hunchback, but owing to illness had not met him. He had never met any one of that name, but when asked to set his memory at work he recalled a certain incident. Ten years previous while on a hunting expedition on the Ashley river, on the east coast of New Zealand, he had trouble with a squatter and his son. The latter was a hunchback and had shot at him.

The captain had little idea that the millionaire and the squatter's son were one and the same, but he took his chances that they were. He threw himself in the way of the man and at once identified him, both by his voice and his deformity. Forty years ago New Zealand was a long way off from England. There was no cable, few steamships, and letters took months to go and come. Their idea was to expose the man at once. The captain made up his mind to bluff him down in his own house. He would either compel him to leave London or expose him. The officer did not figure that the hunchback would attempt to strike back, but went almost at once and secured an interview. He was graciously received, and he felt that he had made no mistake in the identification. The boy of fifteen who had held a rifle within ten feet of his head, finger on the trigger and eyes blazing, had simply become ten years older and changed his squatter's dress for fashionable clothing.

There is no doubt that the so called Melville also recognized the officer. This the latter had not counted on. He gave not the least sign, however. The captain had plenty of moral courage, and as soon as he could bring it around he boldly charged Melville with being an impostor. His charges were met with smiles. Instead of being offended, the hunchback said that he was only too glad that the officer had come to him. If there was the slightest doubt in the mind of any one, that doubt must be set at rest. He would welcome the fullest and closest investigation. If Captain Burton would call at a certain hour next day, a birth certificate, title deeds to lands, letters from prominent people, and so forth and so forth, would be placed before him. The New Zealander would also have present a banker and two prominent merchants to vouch for him in his faroff home.

What we are the most certain of is the very thing we can be tripped up on. Let the man who has lived at 264 Blank street be told that the number is 268 and that the other will bet him 10 to 1 and he can be bluffed out. He is too sure to be sure. The too sure witness is spoiling cases in court every day in the year. The captain was sure and not sure, and the result was that he was soon wishing he had not meddled with the case. He had made his charge, however, and must go through with the affair. He was at the house at the appointed hour and there found two respectable looking men who were introduced to him as the merchants spoken of. On the table were many papers, and the hunchback explained that the banker was expected every moment. While the four waited it was only natural that the wine should be passed around. All were talkative and friendly, and all drank. Then one of the merchants began to talk about an adventure he had had with the natives of New Zealand. The captain was following him closely when all at once he lost the run of the remarks. Then the room began to dance around with him. Then wheels began to turn in his head, and he lost consciousness.

The wine had been drugged. It was two days later when the captain awoke in the hospital, but it was a full week before he recovered his speech and could tell his story. The drug acted to paralyze his tongue, and its effects did not pass away for long weeks. The police were put on the trail of the hunchback, but his house had been closed and he had disappeared. Four weeks later his misshapen body was washed ashore in the Bristol channel, and it had been robbed and the pockets turned inside out. He had confederates, and when the game was up and he was a fugitive he was probably thrown overboard from some steamer.

M. QUAD.

Legs Off Redhot Stove.

Patrick Friel of Butte, Mont., carried a redhot stove for nearly a block in an attempt to make away with the warmth producer. The fire in the stove sputtered merrily, and Friel's hands were blistered and scarred, but the alleged thief was game to the core. Without pausing an instant the man continued his way down the street and but for the timely intervention of Detective Frank White would have landed the coveted heater in his cabin, several blocks distant.

Drinks and Riots at Ninety-four.

Duncan Cunningham, aged ninety-four, described as a pastry cook, was charged at Lambeth police court, London, with being found drunk on licensed premises and committing willful damage. A police constable stated that he was called to the Astbury Arms, Astbury road, Peckham, to take the prisoner, who was decidedly drunk, into custody. The landlord complained that the man had broken the plate glass panel of the bar door with a walking stick.

Married to Keep His Feet Warm.

During the testimony of his thirty-year-old wife, who charged him with assault and battery, John Davenport, aged eighty-one, cried out in Alderman Brown's court in Wilkesbarre, Pa.:

"Oh, I only married her to keep my feet warm!"

A Child's Way of Putting It.

Impressionism without precocity often distinguishes the untaught literary craftsmanship of childhood. A sentence from a little schoolgirl's essay quoted by T. E. Harvey in a pamphlet on "The London Boy's Saturday" is a striking instance. Every one who has seen a bank of bluebells (wild hyacinth) will have noticed the peculiar vapory quality of the color. This twelve-year-old girl expresses it thus: "There were a lot of hyacinths growing, and the air about a yard from the ground looked quite blue." The transference of the color from the flowers to the air gives the effect with the touch of a literary artist. Children are sometimes equally skillful in striking off a difficult definition. It was a Manchester schoolboy who in answer to the question, "What is a hint?" replied tersely, "Half a tell."—Manchester Guardian.

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Notary Public.

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1.20 pm	.0	.....Biggs.....	11.50 arve
1.40	5.4	...Gibsons....	11.19
1.44	7.0	.....Sinks.....	11.10
2.04	9.8	.....Wasco.....	11.00
2.17	14.1	..Klondyke..	10.45
2.23	16.1	...Summit...	10.40
2.40	19.2	Hay Canon Jct	10.24
2.41	19.9	..McDonalds..	10.22
2.53	23.9	.... DeMoss...	10.05
3.04	27.0	.....Moro	9.55
3.13	30.4	..Erskinville .	9.37
3.44	38.5	.Grass Valley.	9.20
4.00	45.8	...Bourbon...	8.55
4.16	52.5	.....Kent	8.40
4.26	57.3	.....Wilcox ...	8.30
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